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A FIFTEENTH-CENTURY MERCHANT IN LONDON AND KENT:

THOMAS WALSINGHAM (d.1457)

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Arch Cant | <i>Archaeologia Cantiana</i> |
| Bradley | H. Bradley, <i>The Views of the Hosts of Alien Merchants 1440-1444</i> (London, 2011) |
| CCR | <i>Calendar of Close Rolls</i> |
| CFR | <i>Calendar of Fine Rolls</i> |
| CLB (A-L) | R.R. Sharpe (ed.), <i>Calendar of Letter-books preserved among the archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall</i> (London, 1899-1912) |
| CPR | <i>Calendar of Patent Rolls</i> |
| Hasted | E. Hasted, <i>The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent</i> (2 nd Edition, Canterbury, 1797) |
| Harris | G. Harriss, <i>Cardinal Beaufort</i> (Oxford, 1988) |
| HoP, Walsingham | <i>The History of Parliament, 1386-1421</i> (Woodbridge, 1993), Thomas Walsingham: < http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/walsingham-thomas-1403 > [accessed 14 January 2013] |
| HR | Hustings Rolls of Wills and Deeds |
| LMA | London Metropolitan Archives |
| LTR | <i>London Topographical Record</i> |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| ODAS | Orpington and District Archaeological Society |
| Sharpe | R.R. Sharpe (ed.), <i>Calendar of wills proved and enrolled in the Court of Hustings</i> (London, 1890) |
| Stow | C.L. Kingsford (ed.), <i>A Survey of London by John Stow Reprinted from the text of 1603</i> (London, 1908) |
| Thrupp | S. Thrupp, <i>The Merchant Class of Medieval London</i> (Ann Arbor, 1962) |
| TNA | The National Archives |
| Webb | E.A. Webb, G.W. Miller, J. Beckwith, <i>The History of Chislehurst</i> (London, 1899) |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION*

In 1424 the London citizen and vintner Thomas Walsingham acquired the manor of Scadbury, then in the parish of Chislehurst in north-west Kent. The manor-house site and much of the associated estate still survives in Scadbury Park, now owned by the London Borough of Bromley. Thomas' acquisition of Scadbury was important to the neighbourhood. The Walsinghams became the leading local family, living at Scadbury until the estate was sold in 1660; they were credited with turning Chislehurst into a desirable London suburb.¹

The Orpington and District Archaeological Society (ODAS) have excavated at Scadbury since 1986; in 2013 the moated site was designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.² It is therefore a good time to assess the estate's first Walsingham owner. Why did he acquire a property in Kent – and what kind of career did he pursue in London?

CONTEXT

The mercantile context in which Thomas Walsingham operated is relatively well-understood. Sylvia Thrupp's analysis of London merchants has shown how they lived and worked, and what they aspired to for their families.³ The way in which London merchants traded across Europe has been explored, and the trading activities of leading

*I am grateful to my supervisor, Professor Matthew Davies, for his guidance; to the Warden and Fellows of All Souls College and the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, for permission to examine the Ballard mazer and seal, and to reproduce images of them; and to Dr F.A. Hart for photographs from his archive of the ODAS excavations at Scadbury.

¹ 'Even in those far-off days, Chislehurst was a favourite place of residence for City merchants. It so remains to this day...' T.A. Bushell, *Imperial Chislehurst* (London, 1974), p.16.

² <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1409786>.

³ Thrupp; .pp. 103-154 discuss merchants' standard of living.

companies such as the Grocers and Mercers have been studied in depth.⁴ Where documentary evidence survives, it has proved possible to explore the careers of individual merchants such as Gilbert Maghfield and Richard Whittington, and to examine in depth the trade in specific commodities such as wool and wine.⁵

London merchants traditionally went into business after apprenticeship in a craft and acceptance into that craft's company or 'mistry'. By the 15th century many merchants had moved beyond their initial company focus; they dealt in a wide range of products and were operating internationally. They might travel abroad or use factors to negotiate on their behalf; they might sell their goods directly to their customers, or to dealers who would handle onward distribution in London or further afield. Some were entrepreneurs, working with alien merchants and managing the import of raw materials such as iron, leather or dyes. Their outward trade was frequently the export to Europe of English wool, highly-valued for its quality, and – by the 15th century – of fine woollen cloth produced in England.

Merchants also handled the import of luxury products, particularly for the court. Damasks and velvets, fine linen, gold and silver-work, jewellery, and luxury foodstuffs such as spices or sugar, were sold at high prices but were expensive to import. They were traded through the ports of London, Hull or Southampton by English or alien merchants, and often mediated by distributors within the city. The court and specifically the royal household were important customers, whether for luxury goods or for the food and wine which the household would consume. The provisioning of the household, and in time of

⁴ Overview, P. Spufford, *Power and Profit: The Merchant in Medieval London* (London, 2002); specific surveys include M. Davies & A. Saunders, *A History of the Merchant Taylors' Company* (Leeds, 2004); P. Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community: the Grocers' Company and the Politics and Trade of London, 1000-1485* (London, 1995); A.F. Sutton, *The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People 1130-1578* (Aldershot, 2005).

⁵ C.M. Barron, 'Richard Whittington: the Man Behind the Myth' in A. Hollaender & W. Kellaway (eds.), *Studies in London History Presented to P.G. Jones* (London, 1969), pp.197-248; M.K. James, 'Gilbert Maghfield, a London Merchant of the Fourteenth Century' in M.K. James (ed. E. Veale), *Studies in the Medieval Wine Trade* (Oxford, 1971) pp. 196-217; T.H. Lloyd, *The English Wool Trade in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1977); S. Rose, *The Wine Trade in Medieval Europe 1000-1500* (London, 2011).

war the army, offered the opportunity for major contracts. Critically, successful merchants were those able to survive in an economy which relied on credit and where supply was uncertain. Payment was often delayed, and for those servicing the king – through the royal household or the Great Wardrobe – bills might never be settled. Customs dues had to be paid to meet the Crown's need for revenue. Opportunities came with risks.

The mercer Richard Whittington began by supplying the Great Wardrobe, and went on to operate as a royal financier and wool exporter. By the time of his death in 1423 he had achieved a highly-successful city career while retaining the confidence of successive kings.⁶ In contrast the career of ironmonger Gilbert Maghfield – known from surviving business ledgers - demonstrates the changes of fortune a London merchant might face.

Maghfield died in 1397 with only limited assets, but had previously become very wealthy - with the confidence of the king and a successful city career as alderman and sheriff. His career shows how merchants increasingly diversified beyond the focus of their guild.

Maghfield specialised in importing iron, but also imported woad and alum, essential for the cloth-trade, and added a range of further products including fish and wine. He sold his iron to other wholesalers in London or to merchants further afield, but the woad and alum often went directly to drapers and dyers. Wine was sold directly to the final consumer – bishops, religious houses, or the sheriffs of Kent and Middlesex. He leased property (including a wharf) from the Abbey of St Mary Graces, and employed staff at his London home and a bailiff to manage his country estates.⁷ Like Whittington, credit and deferred payment were a major feature of his dealings, but caused him greater difficulty.

Maghfield was working at the end of the 14th century, but the detail which can be discovered about his business prompts questions which are relevant to Thomas Walsingham. Did Walsingham use factors or buy from alien merchants? Did he sell directly to customers or to merchant colleagues? He was primarily a vintner, but did he also trade in other commodities? What was his family background and who were his associates? He certainly provided wine for the royal household: how did this influence his

⁶ Barron, 'Richard Whittington' (1969).

⁷ James, 'Gilbert Maghfeld' (1971), esp. p. 202.

career? How important was credit in his affairs? Where was his base - what property did he own, and how did he use it?

Wealthier London merchants such as Maghfield and Whittington played an important part in the government of London, as alderman, sheriff or mayor. Wider opportunities were available to them, as MP for the city or in roles for the Crown, serving on commissions or collecting taxes. Suppliers to the royal household might be substantially rewarded by annuities or grants of property, but there were risks in relying on a single customer. What opportunities did Walsingham seek, and how did he use them to his advantage?

The 1436 Lay Subsidy for London shows that many city merchants experienced relatively limited incomes and only local success.⁸ However, others moved beyond the confines of their company and operated essentially as financiers. London offered opportunities for huge financial gain, and merchants who were successful could go on to establish their families as members of the gentry. Did Thomas Walsingham follow this path, and how did his career compare with those of his colleagues and contemporaries?

WALSINGHAM SOURCES

Maghfield's business ledgers are an unusual survival; evidence for Walsingham's career is more limited. No ledgers survive, though Walsingham states in his will that he kept annual accounts for thirty years. No contemporary documentation survives for his Kent manors. There are references to him in the city's Letter-books and he sometimes features in court actions or property transactions. There are some surviving accounts from his activities as a tax-collector. The Close, Fine and Patent Rolls contain references to his service with the royal household, and to benefits awarded to him. The excavations at Scadbury have provided some archaeological information about his Kent estates.

The 1899 *History of Chislehurst* assessed Thomas Walsingham's life based on the sources then available. The authors recognised the family's importance for Chislehurst; they

⁸ Thrupp, p.125ff.

knew Thomas had made money as a London vintner, and that he or his son had redeveloped the parish church. They were unaware that he was in royal service or twice sat as a Member of Parliament. For them, Thomas was important because he enabled future generations of Walsinghams to play a part in national life.⁹

Later work has filled out Walsingham's London career. Sylvia Thrupp identified him in the 1436 London Lay Subsidy: assessed at £90 a year, he was one of the wealthiest London merchants of his generation. She was aware that he did business with the royal household, but did not know that he had also served as a MP.¹⁰ A fuller biography using a wider range of sources was included in the 1993 *History of Parliament 1386-1421*. This established Walsingham's service as MP for non-London constituencies; demonstrated his involvement in royal service, the wool trade and as a tax collector in addition to his wine-importing; and identified his links with the circle of Cardinal Beaufort.¹¹ Helen Bradley's 2011 publication provided further source-material, demonstrating that from 1440 to 1444 Thomas Walsingham was 'host' to Italian merchants of the Corner and Contarini families.¹²

It is unlikely that significant new material will be found covering Walsingham's time in London or Kent. However, although much has been discovered, it is possible to extract more information from existing sources, particularly when these are related to his wills. PCC copies exist of three wills. The first, made 30 March 1448, in Latin, covers his London property. The second, dated 19 January 1451, also in Latin, covers his property in Kent. Walsingham's final will, from 25 March 1457, sets out the distribution of the personal possessions from his households in London and Kent. Written in English, it provides clues

⁹ 'The presence of the Walsinghams may have attracted a good many people to build and settle [in Chislehurst] but they had not yet established their position at court, and it was fully a hundred years before they were to become the centre of a small circle of families holding appointments at court and in the Government.' Webb, p. 13.

¹⁰ Thrupp, p. 372, p. 385.

¹¹ HoP, 'Walsingham'.

¹² Bradley, pp. 89-103, 259-260.

to the people and places he regarded as significant. The three wills were proved at Lambeth on 17 May 1457.¹³

Using these wills as a starting-point, this dissertation explores how Thomas Walsingham operated as a merchant. It looks specifically at his family and colleagues, and their significance for his career; the property he held in London and Kent, and how he used it; and considers whether Walsingham's career can throw any light on how merchants operated in 15th-century London.

¹³ TNA PROB/11/4 (92); abstracts, and transcription of third will, Webb, pp. 374-6. A transcription of the 1457 will is included as Annex 1,(p.59).

CHAPTER 2

THE FAMILY CIRCLE

‘MY FADIR BIBILL COVERID IN WHITE LETHIR’

In the 17th century the Walsingham family, Lords of the Manor of Scadbury in Kent, traced their origins back to Sir Roger de Walsingham of Little Walsingham, Knight of the Shire for Norfolk in the 13th century. A marriage between Anne de Scathebury (daughter of the historical John de Scathebury, who held Scadbury Manor in the 14th century) and Osmund Walsingham (supposedly a descendant of Sir Roger) provided a suitably aristocratic lineage. However, the story was a fabrication.¹⁴

A family memory of Norfolk roots may nonetheless be correct. Walsinghams were active in the county, particularly in the port of Lynn. In 1352 John de Walsyngham was granted the office of the tronage at Lynn, and in 1393 Roger Walsyngham paid 30 shillings’ subsidy on the import of cloth through the port.¹⁵ It is likely that Walsinghams – probably younger sons looking for craft apprenticeships, and perhaps from more than one branch of the family - found their way to London from Norfolk during the 14th century. The county was a major source of migrants to the city.¹⁶

Thomas Walsingham’s immediate ancestors were Londoners. His 1448 will names his father as Alan Walsyngham; an Alan Walsyngham, citizen and cordwainer, was working in London before 1383, when Walsinghams were already well-established as city residents. In 1314 Reginald and Mary de Walsyngham had taken a neighbour to court (and won); in

¹⁴ The marriage is related in Thomas Philipot’s *Villare Cantianum, or Kent Surveyed and Illustrated* (Canterbury, 1659), p.114, published shortly before Sir Thomas Walsingham was forced to sell the Scadbury estate. Philipott knew Walsingham; he aimed to show that the family were ‘justly registred in the Catalogue of those who were esteemed the most ancient and eminent of this County...’ The story was repeated until corrected in Webb (p.112f.).

¹⁵ *CCR 26 Edward III, Part II*, p.298; N.S.B. Gras, *The Early English Customs System* (Cambridge MA, 1918), p.530.

¹⁶ Thrupp, Table 18, p. 209.

1362-63 John Walsingham completed his apprenticeship as a goldsmith.¹⁷ In 1373 a John Walsyngham sat as a juror at the London Possessory Assizes; he may have been the goldsmith, or the John Walsingham who joined the Grocers' Company that year.¹⁸ They, and other Walsinghams who appear in contemporary documents, were not necessarily members of one family, but their presence suggests that Alan Walsyngham could have been a second-generation Londoner. If he arrived in the city as a migrant – whether from Lynn or elsewhere - he could have joined family members already settled there.

In 1383 Alan was appointed one of five Masters of the Mystery of Cordwainers.¹⁹ The Cordwainers' Guild originated as an early craft guild, but by the 15th century was not considered one of the 'Great Twelve' city companies. Cordwainers worked in new leather, often imported from Spain. There were recurrent disputes between cordwainers and cobblers, who worked with old leather repairing boots and shoes.²⁰ In 1395 Alan served as a juror to investigate the cobblers' complaints against cordwainers.

Alan and his wife Juliana acquired property in London. In 1395 they took possession of a tenement and shop, le Forge, in Gracechurch Street in the parish of St Benet's Gracechurch, and an inn, the Tabard-on-the-Hoop, in the same parish.²¹ The 1412 London Lay Subsidy Roll assesses 'Alanus Walsyngham' at £17 11s: Thrupp's estimates suggest that of 858 citizens, only 115 held property over £10, so he had done well.²² In

¹⁷ London Assize of Nuisance, Misc. Roll DD No. 216:

<<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=35973&strquery=Walsyngham>> [accessed 18 May 2014]; L. Jefferson, *The Wardens' Accounts and Court Minute Books of the Goldsmiths' Mystery of London 1374-1446* (Woodbridge, 2003), p. 87.

¹⁸ *Calendar of assize rolls – Roll BB | London Possessory Assizes: a calendar* (pp.46-72) No. 133,

<<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=64182&strquery=Walsyngham>> [accessed 18/05/2014]; P. Nightingale, *Grocers' Company* (1995), p. 329.

¹⁹ CLB (H), Folio clxviii b, <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=33471>> [accessed 26 July 2014].

²⁰ G. Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (London, 1938), p.84f.

²¹ LMA X109/416 (133/76).

²² J.C.L. Stahlschmidt, 'Lay Subsidy Temp. Henry IV' in *Archaeological Journal* 44 (1887), p. 61; 'Will's Wassyngham Alutar' (another Walsingham cordwainer?) was assessed at only 16s (p.60); Thrupp, p. 125 (there are limitations on the use of the subsidy figures, but they give an indication of relative position).

December 1412 Alan was summoned as a juror for Bridge Ward, but only three days later was discharged from service on juries 'on account of increasing age'.²³ He may have died soon after. No will is registered.

Thomas Walsingham's 1457 will includes a bequest of 'my Fadir Bibill coverid in white lethir w^t clasps of silver and gilt'. This may have been a link with his father's cordwainer past: perhaps a binding Alan had made to demonstrate his skills when becoming a freeman, or a gift made to him when Master. However, the heirloom went to Thomas' cousin Nicholas Messingham rather than to his own son.

'MY COSYN NICHOLAS MESSYNGHAM CLERK'

Nothing is known of Thomas' mother Juliana. It is possible she was a Messingham by birth, since a Master Nicholas Messingham clerk (or Massingham – both spellings are used) is described in Thomas Walsingham's 1457 will as his cousin. A John Messingham, citizen of London (Juliana's brother?), is named in connection with Alan Walsyngham's acquisition of a Gracechurch Street property in 1402-03.²⁴

The date of Thomas' birth is unknown, and his wills mention no siblings. Webb identified him with Thomas Walsingham 'Master and overseer of the trade of Hurers' in 1391, but Thomas the Hurer, if a relative at all, must have been of an older generation.²⁵ It is also possible that the mercer Nicholas Walsyngham, Warden of the Mercers' Company in 1396, was a family member. 'Nicholas Walsyngham' is listed as one of Thomas Walsingham's executors in 1457; however, this is almost certainly an error by the PCC

²³ CLB (H): jury service, folio cxx; discharge, folio cxix b;

< <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=33684> > [accessed 25 July 2014].

²⁴ LMA X109/416 (HR 131/64).

²⁵ Webb, p. 113; Riley, *Memorials of London Life*, pp. 523-531; CLB(H), Fol. ccix;

<http://www.British-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=57731&strquery=Walsyngham>, accessed 26 July 2014.

scribe. ‘My cosyn Nicholas Massyngham clerk’ received several bequests and must have been the intended executor, as he was in Walsingham’s other wills.²⁶

‘THOMAS WALSYNGHAM VINETAR’

Thomas did not follow his father into a craft career. There is no information on his apprenticeship, but it is likely he had become a member of the Vintners’ Company some time before supplying wine to Richard II. In 1398 the king granted him – ‘the king’s servant’ - land in Yeovil, and in 1399 he was buying ‘various victuals’ for the household.²⁷ Contemporary documents refer to him as a vintner.²⁸ The choice of company suggests Thomas intended to improve upon his father’s status. The Vintners’ Company had retained its position as one of the ‘Great Twelve’, though by the 15th century its power within the city was lessening.²⁹ His father’s 1395 lease on the Tabard inn may have started him in business. In 1398 Alan Walsingham leased a further property, this time with his son: ‘le Grenegate’, in the parish of St Andrew-upon-Cornhill.³⁰ This may have provided the base for Thomas’ on-going commercial activities.

In the first decade of the 15th century Thomas consolidated his merchant career. Increasingly he focused on the royal household.³¹ He continued to supply wine after Richard’s deposition, and was chosen to administer Chief Butler John Payn’s affairs after his death in 1402.³² Further benefits followed. In 1404 Walsingham ‘the king’s servant’ was awarded the office of Gauger of Wine at the Cinque Ports, ‘with all the due wages, fees and profits’, which he held until 1409.³³ In 1407 Henry IV granted him Le Grenegate

²⁶ A.F. Sutton, *Mercery* (2005), p.173 n.60, assumes a relationship, but there is no definitive evidence.

²⁷ *CCR 1398-1399*, p. 429; *CPR 1399-1401*, pp. 18-19.

²⁸ eg LMA X109/419 (HR 158/78): ‘Thomas Walsyngham...civis et vinetar[ius] London’.

²⁹ A. Crawford, *History of the Vintners’ Company*, (London, 1977); C.M. Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2004), p. 230.

³⁰ LMA X109/416 (HR 135/71).

³¹ *CPR 1399-1401*, p. 480; *CPR 1401-1405*, p. 280; *CPR 1405-1408*, p. 420; *CPR 1413-1416*, p.13.

³² HoP, ‘John Payn’: <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/payn-john-ii-1402> [accessed 30 July 2014].

³³ *CPR 1401-1405*, p. 365; *CPR 1408-1413*, p. 101.

lease for life, perhaps confirming it as his London base.³⁴ During this period Walsingham established close links with key players in the new regime: Thomas Chaucer, Payn's successor as Chief Butler of England; Lewis John, a fellow-vintner; Thomas Haseley, future Clerk of the Commons; and Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester.

A William Walsyngham 'otherwise called "William of the Saucerie"' features in property transactions of 1408, so it is possible that Thomas had relatives who were employed in the household. The saucery was one of the smaller departments of the household, reporting to the Chief Clerk of the kitchen.³⁵

In the absence of surviving business records, there is little information about how Walsingham went about importing wine. He may have travelled abroad himself, or used factors and/or alien merchants. A clue may lie in a document in which Thomas Walsingham and John Cok seek safe passage for alien merchants acting on their behalf to travel to Brittany by sea to buy wine.³⁶ It is not possible to make a firm identification of this John Cok, as Cok/Cook is a common name among London merchants; he may have been an importer in his own right, or a factor working with Walsingham.³⁷

The safe conduct is sought from the Archbishop as Chancellor, so must date to Archbishop Arundell's Chancellorship, 1407-10 or 1412-13. The alien merchants, Peter Rovand of Roddon and John Ilmayn of Brittany, are described as 'our prisoners'. The wines imported at this date were usually non-sweet wines from the Bordeaux area of Gascony then under English control, but white wines from Brittany were purchased when access was possible – Gilbert Maghfield hosted merchants from La Rochelle to facilitate his Breton wine imports.³⁸ The document does not explain why Walsingham and Cok

³⁴ CPR 1405-1408, p. 409.

³⁵ In 1408, William Walsyngham conveyed a quitclaim for a manor and advowson in Berkshire to Thomas Chaucer, Robert James, and Thomas Edward, and then to John Golafre (CCR 1405-1409, p.400). Saucery: C. Given-Wilson, *The Royal Household and the King's Affinity: Service, Politics and Finance in England 1360-1413* (London, 1986), pp.13 & 58-59.

³⁶ TNA SC/8/306/15258.

³⁷ Sutton (*Mercery*, p. 302f.), identifies two John Coks, father and son, working as factors, but this family cannot be linked back to Walsingham.

³⁸ James, 'Gilbert Maghfield', (1971), p. 201.

were holding Breton prisoners. Merchants sometimes bought prisoners-of-war with the aim of making a profit from their ransoms; maybe Rovand and Ilmayn hoped their knowledge of local trading contacts would secure their release.

Walsingham also established himself as a wool exporter. At this period the declining export trade in English wool was controlled through the Calais Staple, which provided security for the merchants involved while guaranteeing the customs revenues. The trade was handled by relatively few merchants; in 1405-1406 only 2344 sacks of wool were exported from London by 38 individuals, six of whom (including John Olney and Richard Whittington) exported more than 100 sacks each, accounting for almost half the total.³⁹ Webb states that from 1407 Walsingham had obtained the right to ship 100 sacks of wool in galleys yearly from the port of London, but the evidence for this is unclear.⁴⁰ However, by 1417 he was certainly exporting wool: merchants including Thomas Walsingham and a Lawrence Cook appealed to the Sandwich customs collectors for permission to re-ship their wool to Calais after a shipwreck.⁴¹

The Cok/Cook family may have continued to work with Walsingham: the bequests in his final will suggest he set store by long-held relationships, and a Robert Cook received 40s.

'MARGARET MY WIFE'

By 1412 Walsingham was well-established as a London merchant. He was assessed in the London Lay Subsidy at £17 13s 11½d - slightly more than his father, more than 'Thom' Cook'' at 6s 8d, much more than Thomas Chaucer's £8 (but Chaucer's main property lay outside London). However, it was less than many of his merchant contemporaries - Lewis John at £20 6s 8d, the grocer John Olney at £20 1d, mercers Richard Whittington and Alan Everard at £25 and £36 18s 10d, and goldsmith Dru Barantyn at £55 16s 11d.⁴²

³⁹ Lloyd, *English Wool Trade* (1977), p.253.

⁴⁰ Webb, p.113, 'a grant by royal letters patent 8th Henry IV'', may be a confusion with a later grant.

⁴¹ *CCR 1413-19*, p. 416.

⁴² Stahlschmidt, 'Lay Subsidy', pp. 56-82.

By 1413 - after his father's death - Thomas had married Margaret, widow (and heiress) of vintner John Wakele junior, who had died in 1408, and daughter of London goldsmith Henry Bamme. John Wakele's father (d.1407) had been a vintner and alderman.⁴³ In the 1412 Lay Subsidy a 'Henricus Ramme aur[ifaber]' – a mis-transcription for Bamme? - is assessed at £13. This is less than Alan or Thomas Walsingham, but Henry also had property in Middlesex and Suffolk. Henry Bamme had also served as an alderman.⁴⁴ He was almost certainly the brother of the wealthy goldsmith and mayor, Adam Bamme.⁴⁵

The marriage cemented Thomas Walsingham's connections with a wealthy London merchant family. Richard Bamme, son of Adam Bamme by his third wife, is named as an executor in Thomas' second will (Henry Bamme had no surviving sons). Richard inherited estates in London and Kent, including the manor of Grange at Gillingham.⁴⁶ Grange was an outpost of the Cinque Port of Hastings, with a wharf on the north Kent coast - traditionally used to take wool out of the county and to bring Kent produce into London. Thomas might have found it useful to access the Grange wharf for his own transactions. Richard Bamme died in 1452 but his son John kept in touch with the Walsinghams.⁴⁷

Thomas' wills show that he had a surviving son and daughter, Thomas and Philippa. Margaret was still living in 1442 when Thomas and his wife received a grant of two pipes

⁴³ LMA X109/419 (HR 164/50); John Wakele, senior & junior: Thrupp, p. 371. Wakele senior's will: Sharpe, p. 367-373, <http://british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=66947> [accessed 28 September 2014]

⁴⁴ Stahlschmidt, 'Lay Subsidy', p. 60; Thrupp, p. 322; T.F. Reddaway, *The Early History of the Goldsmiths' Company 1327-1509* (London, 1975), p. 278; his 1413 will, which makes no reference to Margaret: Sharpe, p.406-409, Roll 143 (54), <<http://www.british-history.c.uk/report.aspx?compid=66956>> [accessed 25 April 2014].

⁴⁵ Thrupp, p. 322; HoP, 'Adam Bamme': <<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/bamme-adam-1397>> [accessed 30 July 2014].

⁴⁶ F. Meddens & G. Draper, "Out on a Limb": Insights into Grange, a Small Member of the Cinque Ports Confederation', *Arch. Cant.* Vol. CXXXV (2014), pp. 1-32.

⁴⁷ Richard Bamme's will: TNA PROB 11/1 (25176); and D. Harrington, <<https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/Libr/Wills/Sdw/Bk01/page%20005.htm>> [accessed 29 July 2014]. The property was left to younger son John, as elder son Richard was 'rebellious and disobedient'. Thomas Walsingham [junior] and Thomas Ballard, esquire, are named in relation to the purchase of a manor from John Bamme, gentleman, in the early 1460s: TNA C 1/2/61.

of wine for life, but must have died by 1448; she is not named in his first will.⁴⁸ Thomas' third will states that she was buried in the church of St Katherine's-by-the-Tower.

'THE KING'S ESQUIRE, GREGORY BALLARD THE KING'S BUTLER'

The provision of wine to the royal household must have brought Thomas Walsingham into contact with Gregory Ballard. This was to be a link of great personal significance. Ballard's career provides an interesting contrast to Walsingham's. He was a retainer in Richard II's household by 1391, variously described as the 'king's servant', 'yeoman of the cellar' and 'servant of the butlery'. In this capacity he may well have purchased wine from Walsingham. Ballard's royal employment proved lucrative.⁴⁹ Unlike Walsingham, who was engaged periodically by the household but maintained a distinct mercantile career, there is no evidence that he operated as a merchant. He had property in London, but held no civic office.⁵⁰

In 1396 Richard II granted Ballard the manors of Westcombe and Spytelcombe in East Greenwich, Kent, along with nearby property.⁵¹ These were conveniently close to London and to the wharf at Greenwich.⁵² Ballard appointed Geoffrey Chaucer – then also a Crown employee - as an attorney to handle the property transactions on his behalf, and Chaucer is named as a witness.⁵³ By 1397, Gregory Ballard had progressed to be 'the king's esquire, Gregory Ballard the king's butler'; as a retainer he was expected to support the king on military campaigns abroad, and in 1394 and 1399 he received letters of protection in relation to Richard's expeditions to Ireland.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ *CPR 1441-1446*, p. 127; Thomas is described as 'under-butler of Henry V', suggesting that by 1442 he no longer fulfilled that role in the household.

⁴⁹ *CPR 1388-92*, p. 494; grants made to Ballard: *CPR 1391-96*, pp. 259, .279, .280, 509, 619, 717, 719.

⁵⁰ In 1412 'Gregorius Balard' is assessed at 116s 8d (Stahlschmidt, p.65); but no London property in his will.

⁵¹ *CPR 1396-9*, p. 216.

⁵² M. Egan, 'The early church in Greenwich', *Arch .Cant.* Vol. CXXIII (2003), pp.233-251.

⁵³ M.M. Crow & C. C. Olsen, *Chaucer: Life-records* (Oxford, 1966), p.506ff.

⁵⁴ *CPR 1391-96*, pp. 474, 477; *CPR 1396-9*, pp.216, 267; G. Harriss, *Shaping the Nation*, (Oxford 2005), p.511 ff.

In 1399, on John Payn's appointment as Chief Butler, Gregory Ballard moved into the service of the Archbishops of Canterbury (Arundell, then Chichele), first as Treasurer, then as Steward of the Lands.⁵⁵ The Archbishop held extensive estates in Kent and elsewhere so this was an important role. Ballard went on to acquire Horton and Sapington manors in East Kent.

Gregory Ballard's will, made on 4 October 1415 and proved in 1417, indicates that he was named for his mother's family, the Gregorys, who held the manor of Beaconsfield.⁵⁶ He asked to be buried at St Alphege's church in Greenwich; his wife Katherine and elder son Thomas, then under age, were to inherit the East Greenwich properties and Horton Manor (Sapington went to his younger son). Witnesses included a Thomas Cook, who received £10. Ballard accompanied Henry V to France in 1415; he survived Agincourt, but died, and was presumably buried, in France.⁵⁷

A MAPLE-WOOD MAZER

Gregory Ballard's son Thomas was later to marry Philippa Walsingham. Ballard's 1465 will requests that he be buried next to his father-in-law in St Katherine's-by-the-Tower (rather than in St Alphege's, though he left bequests to the Greenwich church).⁵⁸ This suggests that his relationship with Thomas Walsingham was unusually close. Had Gregory and Thomas been friends as well as business associates, and did Walsingham take Thomas under his wing after Gregory's death? He made him an executor for each of his three wills; in his final will, he bequeathed him 'my suyte Cuppe' and the 'great bible' which Cardinal Beaufort had given him, which must have held considerable personal meaning (see Chapter 3).

⁵⁵ HoP 'John Payn'; R. du Boulay, *The Lordship of Canterbury* (London, 1966), p. 394.

⁵⁶ E.F. Jacob (ed.), *The Register of Henry Chichele, Vol. II* (London, 1937), pp. 114f.

⁵⁷ <<http://www.medievalsoldier.org>> [accessed 19 September 2014]; TNA E 101/69/5/417, E 358/6; *CPR 1413-16*, pp. 390, 405.

⁵⁸ TNA PROB /11/5 (158).

In 1437 Thomas and Philippa Ballard presented a mazer of maple-wood with silver-gilt mountings to the newly-founded college of All Souls at the University of Oxford.⁵⁹ The mazer base contains Thomas Ballard's initials 'TB' with his arms of a gryphon. All Souls was founded by Chichele in 1437 to train theologians and lawyers for the church, and as a chantry to honour the memory of the men who had died in the French wars.⁶⁰ It seems likely that the Ballards made the gift in memory of Gregory. Thomas Ballard's will makes no specific reference to All Souls, but includes a bequest to support poor theology students at Oxford University.



Figure 1: The Ballard Mazer

⁵⁹ The mazer is catalogued in R. Marks & P. Williamson (eds.), *Gothic: Art for England 1400 -1547* (London, 2003), p.239. The catalogue entry explains that the mazer appears in college inventories of 1437, making it a very early gift, and that Thomas and Philippa Ballard are listed at All Souls as college benefactors. The mazer is currently on loan to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (LI223.5).

⁶⁰ J. Catto, Henry Chichele, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: <http://www.oxforddnb.com.catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/printable/5271> [accessed 5 August 2014]; Jacob, Register, Vol. I (1937).

The Ballard mazer is a fine example of an object commonly found in merchants' homes.⁶¹ Thomas Walsingham's final will does not explicitly record his possession of mazers, but refers in general terms to 'items of silver and gold' in both his households which his son is to inherit; these might well have included mazers with silver or gold mounts. Richard Bamme's will lists mazers among his household goods.⁶²

Thomas Walsingham must have been satisfied that he had secured a successful marriage for Philippa.⁶³ In 1443 Archbishop Chichele awarded Thomas Ballard 'in return for services' a grant for life of the Archbishop's parks, warrens, chases and woods within the counties of Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Middlesex, and the office of Chief Keeper and Huntsman.⁶⁴ Ballard – described as 'armiger' on his seal matrix - became Sheriff of Kent in 1452. He based his shrievalty at Horton, near Canterbury, a manor inherited from his father with a manor-house, detached stone chapel and water-mill.⁶⁵



Figure 2: Impression of Thomas Ballard's seal matrix

⁶¹ Thrupp p. 146: 'every merchant...had at least one or two mazers...and the wealthiest had magnificent collections...'

⁶² TNA PROB 11/4 (25176).

⁶³ Ballard's seal is in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (AN2009.100). Hasted, 'General History of the Sheriffs of Kent', vol. I, pp.177-213; <<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=53762>> [accessed 27 October, 2014].

⁶⁴ Jacob, *Register*, Vol. I (1937), p. 124.

⁶⁵ T. Tatton Brown, 'The Topography and Buildings of Horton Manor, Near Canterbury', *Arch. Cant.* Vol. XCVIII (1982), pp. 77-105.

Ballard's will bequeathed his property to his and Philippa's younger son Richard, while providing an income for their first-born son Thomas, who was lame, deaf and dumb.⁶⁶

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown how Thomas Walsingham began his merchant career, and how he established key and enduring relationships – particularly through marriage - which would support him throughout his life. These relationships provided support, know-how, property and contacts.

Connections with the Bammes and Ballards offered access to Thames wharves outside London (though there is no direct evidence to show that Walsingham traded through them), while the marriages cemented his connections within both the city and the royal household, and secured the future of his daughter. Walsingham's links with Gregory Ballard must have brought him into contact with senior players in the royal household; his consequential relationships with Thomas Chaucer, Thomas Haseley and Lewis John, and also with Bishop Beaufort, opened up important opportunities.

Thomas started out as a vintner, importing wine: this brought him to the notice of the royal household and supported his roles as under-butler and Gauger of Wines. Like many of his contemporaries, however, he moved well beyond his initial company focus. The next chapter explores how his career developed.

⁶⁶ TNA PROB/11/5 (158).

CHAPTER 3

CITY AND CROWN

‘SO MUCH OCCUPIED IN THE KING’S SERVICE’

Married and financially secure, Thomas Walsingham was in line for the civic duties expected of a wealthy London merchant. In 1424 he was proposed as an Alderman for Vintry ward but not elected. In February 1429 he was elected as Alderman for Castle Baynard ward, but after only three months was discharged ‘owing to his being so much occupied in the King’s service, and also in consideration of his having undertaken to glaze, in best manner, the eastern gable or window of the Guildhall’.⁶⁷

Discharge from duty as an alderman on account of royal service was always highly unusual; the few discharges documented are usually on account of age or infirmity.⁶⁸ In the 1420s the Guildhall was undergoing a major and costly building programme. The huge east window, which stood behind the raised dais of the Hustings court, would have been expensive to glaze; Stow describes the glass as ‘painted’.⁶⁹ The city authorities must have been pleased to secure Walsingham’s undertaking; nonetheless, his discharge remains exceptional. He did not stand as an alderman again.

What ‘service’ might Walsingham have been engaged in? By the end of March 1429 Henry Beaufort had secured sufficient resource to enable the recruitment of an army to fight in France, and in May troops were sent to aid the Duke of Bedford at the siege of Orleans. Presumably Walsingham played a significant role in provisioning the army. It is possible that he also assisted Beaufort in ensuring the repayment of loans made to the Crown. Such loans were frequently made on the surety of tax revenue, but this revenue

⁶⁷ A.B. Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London*, II, 7; *CLB (K)*; folios 71-83, 1429-30: <<http://www.history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=33714&strquery=Thomas%20walsyngham>> [accessed 20 October 2013].

⁶⁸ Thrupp, p.54, gives the few 14th century resignations on account of royal commitments; there are none from the early 15th century.

⁶⁹ C. M. Barron, *The Medieval Guildhall of London* (London, 1974), p. 25; Stow, *Survey*, (i), p.272.

was increasingly over-subscribed. Walsingham was appointed a subsidy collector for London in 1422, with John Olney; he had already been appointed (in 1421, to join the mercer William Estfield), as Collector of Tunnage and Poundage for the port of London.⁷⁰ In 1426, he was again appointed along with Estfield to collect this subsidy in London, 'the said Walsyngham on the nomination of the bishop of Winchester'.⁷¹ He held this post until 1447.⁷²

Although Walsingham continued to operate as a London merchant, from 1400 onwards he increasingly looked beyond the city. He forged close links with Thomas Chaucer, Lewis John, and Thomas Haseley.⁷³ In 1402 Chaucer, cousin and associate of Henry Beaufort, had become Henry IV's Chief Butler following the death of John Payn. Lewis John, also an associate of Prince Henry, was appointed as Chaucer's deputy. Walsingham may already have acted as deputy for Payn and he went on to act for Chaucer.⁷⁴ He worked with John, a fellow-vintner, particularly for the benefit of other vintners or the Company.⁷⁵ In 1413, Chaucer and Walsingham, along with others, stood surety of 1000 marks for John's appointment as Master of the Mints at London and Calais.⁷⁶

Chaucer, Walsingham and Haseley also worked together; in 1415 Walsingham stood as mainpernor for Chaucer, and in 1420 he and Haseley were mainpernors for Chaucer's marriage.⁷⁷ In 1424 Walsingham was mainpernor with William Hervey for the transfer of John Arundell's lands to Chaucer and Haseley until Arundell's son came of age, and in 1432 Haseley and Walsingham acted together to transfer property to Hervey. After

⁷⁰ *CPR 1422-29*, p. 525, records him in this post in 1425.

⁷¹ *CPR 1422-29*, p. 360.

⁷² *CFR 3 Henry V*, p.380; *CPR 1422-29*, pp. 318, .360; *CPR 1446-52* p.108.

⁷³ Biographies in HoP: 'Thomas Chaucer', <<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/chaucer-thomas-1367-1434>>, 'Lewis John': <<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/john-lewis-1442>>; 'Thomas Haseley': <<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/haseley-thomas-1449>> [accessed 4 July 2014].

⁷⁴ HoP, Walsingham.

⁷⁵ *CCR, 1405-09*, pp. 146-7; *CCR, 1413-19*, p.66.

⁷⁶ *CCR 1413-19*, pp. 64-66.

⁷⁷ *CFR 3 Henry V*, p. 141; *CPR 1422-29*, p. 360.

Chaucer's death in 1434 Walsingham and Haseley were appointed as feoffees of his estates.⁷⁸ Walsingham had also become known to Bishop Henry Beaufort – perhaps as a consequence of his links with Chaucer (Beaufort's cousin), or directly as a provider of wine for the Bishop's household.

These relationships were significant for Walsingham. He became a MP in 1410, and again in 1413. He did not sit for London, but for country constituencies - Wareham (Hampshire) in 1410, and Lyme Regis (Dorset) in 1413.⁷⁹ Lewis John also sat in the 1410 Parliament; Thomas Haseley, later Clerk of the Commons, sat in both. Chaucer was Speaker in the Commons from 1410.

Walsingham's seats were unusual for a Londoner to hold; London merchants more commonly sat as MPs for the City itself. The *History of Parliament's* analysis indicates that a significant number of MPs in 1410 could be considered supporters of Prince Henry and his allies, and suggests that Beaufort and Chaucer would have been influential in bringing them into Parliament – similarly in 1413, shortly after the accession of Henry V. Walsingham must have been included among this group.⁸⁰

To take the extraordinary step of seeking discharge as an alderman, which effectively ruled out any further opportunities for civic advancement, Walsingham must have concluded that his interests were better served through his links with the royal household and the circle around Chaucer - perhaps particularly, his links with Beaufort. In this he was exceptional among his contemporaries. Many London merchants provisioned the royal household or supplied the Great Wardrobe, but most combined this with a civic career; they identified primarily with the City rather than with the Crown.

⁷⁸ HoP, 'Thomas Chaucer'.

⁷⁹ HoP, 'Walsingham'.

⁸⁰ J.S. Roskell, *The House of Commons 1386-1421*, Vol. I: Introductory Survey, p. 371f.

'A BYLL OF ENGROSEMENT THAT I HAVE ACCUSTOMED ME TO USE...'

Walsingham states in his 1457 will that from 1425, he had had kept 'bills of engrossment' from Easter to Easter, 'to know what I owe and what to me is owing'. This careful book-keeping paid off. By the mid-1430s Walsingham had added considerably to his wealth. In the 1436 London Lay Subsidy he was assessed at £90 a year, holding property in London, Kent, Middlesex and Hertfordshire.⁸¹ The assessment put him on a par with the mercer William Estfield, and positioned him amongst the wealthiest Londoners. Most city merchants were well below this level - including Hugh Wych at £20, John Olney £11, Robert Large £15, and Richard Rich at £28.

Significantly, in February 1436 Walsingham was included in a list of those making loans 'for equipment of the army about to be sent to France' following a specific request from Cardinal Beaufort - he lent 100 marks.⁸² Those listed are largely drawn from the upper levels of society, or have a direct connection to the royal household or to Beaufort himself. Few London merchants appear. Lewis John lent 100 marks; Richard Quatermayn, who served with Walsingham as a subsidy collector, £40; Thomas Frowyk and Hamon Sutton lent 100 marks and £200 respectively. By this time, Walsingham was evidently identified as one of only a small group of merchants who could be relied on to offer financial support to the Crown.

Despite his overt links with the Crown's policies, Walsingham nonetheless retained the trust of his fellow-citizens. In 1432, he witnessed a deed assigning property access for Whittington College, and he stood surety on a number of occasions for orphans of merchants (for example, in 1442-43 with Richard Rich and others, for the sons of the late mercer and Alderman Robert Large).⁸³

⁸¹ Thrupp, p. 385. Walsingham's property in Middlesex and Hertfordshire cannot be identified.

⁸² H. Nicholas (ed.), *Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England*, Vol. 4 (London, 1835), p. 328.

⁸³ *CPR 1429-1436*, p. 215; *CLB (K)*, Folio 208, 1442-43:

<<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=33726>> [accessed 26 July 2014].

‘HUGO WYCHE OF LONDON’

Two fellow-merchants, Hugh Wych and William Estfield, are specifically named in Walsingham’s wills. Both were highly-successful mercers. Like Walsingham, both supplied the royal household or Great Wardrobe, and traded with alien merchants. Unlike Walsingham, however, both were knighted after outstanding civic careers.

Hugh Wych is named as an executor in Walsingham’s 1450 Kent will, so he must then have been regarded as a close associate.⁸⁴ Like Walsingham, he served as a MP – but for London, not an external seat.⁸⁵ He was not named as an executor in Walsingham’s final will and received no bequest, so their paths may later have diverged.

‘THE BORDE CLOTH AND THE TOWELL THAT I HADDE OF SR WILLIAM ESTFELD’

Walsingham’s 1457 will includes a bequest to his daughter Philippa of a gift from Sir William Estfield - a ‘Borde cloth [fine linen from Bordeaux] and towell’. Walsingham was an executor of Estfield’s 1448 will, so the gift may have recognised this. The executors (another was Richard Rich) were responsible for delivering Estfield’s bequest of a water conduit for the city.⁸⁶ Estfield would have known Walsingham as a fellow-merchant, but also as a fellow-customer and perhaps as a supporter of Beaufort. Estfield, a wealthy mercer who exported wool through the Calais Staple, had wide-ranging financial interests. He served as a MP – but like Wych, for London rather than elsewhere – and his civic career was exceptional. However, unlike many of his fellow-staplers, he explicitly supported Beaufort’s drives to raise money for the French wars, organising loans from both the City and the Staple.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Webb, p. 374.

⁸⁵ Wych’s career: Thrupp, p. 375; Bradley, p. 266f; Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, p.344.

⁸⁶ Thrupp, p. 338; Bradley, p.190 ; Sharpe, p.509; *CLB (K)*, folio 271, folios 271-281, 1453-55,

<<http://www.british-historyonline.ac.uk/compid=33733>> [accessed 2 September 2014].

⁸⁷ *CFR 3 Henry V*: p.380; *CPR 1422-29*, p. 318, p.360.

Estfield's links with Beaufort may have gone back to childhood. His family had property in Tickhill, Yorkshire, and he made bequests to Tickhill church.⁸⁸ Beaufort inherited the wardenship of Tickhill free chapel from his mother, and retained it until 1432.⁸⁹

'TO JOHN CORNER V MARKS'

From 1440-1444 Estfield and Walsingham served along with other leading London merchants as 'hosts' to alien merchants in the city. Under an Act of Parliament of 1439 all alien merchants – previously permitted to trade freely - were allocated to an English 'host', who would keep a detailed report ('view') on their trading activities and provide returns to the Exchequer. The policy had been devised in response to concerns that alien merchants were importing excessive quantities of luxury goods while failing to purchase English produce for export. The requirements were onerous and after four years were suspended, but for those years the 'views' provide invaluable information on the goods imported, to whom they were disbursed and for what price, and the goods the alien merchants themselves purchased.⁹⁰

Thomas Walsingham was appointed on four occasions as a host to members of the wealthy Venetian Contarini and Corner families, so must have been seen as a supporter of the policy. His views show that Walsingham did not handle their merchandise himself; his sole (though expensive) purchase was in 1440-41, of four bales of pepper.⁹¹ Estfield was a host on three occasions, also to members of the Contarini family. Hugh Wych never served as a host, though he sold cloth of 'various colours and at various prices' to the Corner/Contarini partnership.⁹²

⁸⁸ Thrupp, p. 338; Sharpe, pp. 508-513, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=66988&strquery=Estfield> [accessed 23 September 2014].

⁸⁹ Harriss, pp. 2-8.

⁹⁰ Bradley, Introduction, esp. pp. X-XXV.

⁹¹ Bradley, pp. 34-49, 190.

⁹² Bradley, p. 93.

Walsingham remained in contact with the Corners until his death. ‘John Corner’ (not named in the Views, so presumably a younger member of the family) is left 5 marks in Walsingham’s final will, and pardoned ‘of alle that he owight me’.

‘THE... BIBILLE... THAT MY LORDE CARDYNALLE GAVE ME’

Walsingham refers in his 1457 will to two gifts he had received from Cardinal Beaufort. He does not state why they were given, but clearly regarded them as highly significant: both were to remain in the family. The first, bequeathed to his son, was ‘...a payre Bedez of Ambre with a balle of muske in the ende, which my lord Cardynalle gave me, to this entente that he noo wise alien the saide bedes, but perpetually to conveye hem to his owen vse and Issue yf god sende him any matrymonyaly, And yf he Dye w^toute, that the saide bedes turne to his sustyr Philip and her Issue’.

The second gift, bequeathed to his son-in-law Thomas Ballard, was ‘the grete Bibille that my lorde Cardynalle gave me, wretyn of boleyyn hand’. Beaufort – a book-collector - had access to manuscripts, not least as executor to the Duke of Bedford; he was said to have ‘had the substance’ of Bedford’s inheritance of Charles V’s books.⁹³

Why had Walsingham merited gifts from Beaufort? The will gives no explanation. The general answer must lie in his services to Beaufort and the Crown, and his support of Beaufort’s military and economic policies. At a more practical level, Beaufort may have valued Walsingham’s capacity to export wool. Harriss has shown that much of Beaufort’s wealth derived from wool, from large flocks in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Oxfordshire, but ‘how this crop was disposed of is...not traceable’; he notes that although Beaufort had connections with London merchants including Thomas Walsingham and Hugh Dyke, there is no evidence that they exported his produce.⁹⁴ Dyke, a wealthy draper and stapler, provided vestments to Beaufort, and cloth to the royal household and to the Duke of Bedford.⁹⁵ Walsingham had some involvement in providing security for a loan of 8000

⁹³ J. Stratford, *The Bedford Inventories* (London, 1993), pp. 95, 101.

⁹⁵ Harriss, p. 412-413 (footnote).

marks made by Dyke, Estfield and Hamo Sutton, all fellow-staplers. A grant of 1000 marks was made by Beaufort to a number of individuals, including Dyke and Walsingham, as collateral for the loan.⁹⁶

Although there is no direct evidence that Walsingham exported wool from Beaufort's estates, he was certainly in a position to do so. Beaufort's Flemish connections had made many Staplers reluctant to support him, but Walsingham may have been prepared (or felt obliged) to work with him. He had the capacity to assist with wool exports from at least 1417 (p.15 above) ; by 1441 he had been granted the right for life to ship 100 sacks of wool in galleys or ships in London or Southampton to 'the parts beyond the mountains' (Italy?), paying dues as if they were transported to the town of Calais.⁹⁷

It seems likely that Beaufort identified Walsingham as someone who could be useful to him – reliable, able to 'get things done', financially trustworthy. He kept in contact with Walsingham even in his retirement. In 1443 they transferred the manor of Bekesbourne to the Prior and monks of Christ Church, Canterbury.⁹⁸ Bekesbourne, to the south-east of Canterbury, was an outpost of the Cinque Port of Hastings, but the manor was divided; part had previously been acquired by Archbishop Chichele.⁹⁹ It was used as a country retreat.

Beaufort had developed close links with the Priory (Henry IV and Thomas Beaufort, Earl of Somerset were buried in the Cathedral) from 1417, and had been admitted to the confraternity in 1433 in return for 'the immense benefits' he had conferred upon it.¹⁰⁰ The Prior had contacted him in the 1420s to inquire about acquisition of the manor, and the transfer in 1443 must have been beneficial to the Priory.¹⁰¹ Beaufort resided at Christ

⁹⁶ Harriss, p. 66; pp. 206-7, .271. *CCR 1435-41*, p.38.

⁹⁷ *CPR 1436-1441*, p.528.

⁹⁸ TNA C 143/449/23; *CPR 1441-1446*, p. 219.

⁹⁹ Hasted, Vo. 9, p.266-276; Tim Tatton-Brown, 'Excavations at the "Old Palace", Bekesbourne, Near Canterbury', *Arch. Cant.* Vol. XCVI (1980), pp. 30-34; D. Gilmour, 'Bekesbourne and the King's esnecca 1110-1445', *Arch. Cant.* Vol. CXXXII (2012), pp.315-327.

¹⁰⁰ Harriss, p.366; C.E. Woodruff, 'Notes on the Inner Life and Domestic Economy of the Priory of Christ Church Canterbury in the Fifteenth Century', *Arch. Cant.* LIII (1940), pp. 8-10.

¹⁰¹ Gilmour, 'Bekesbourne', p. 323.

Church from 1445 until shortly before his death in 1447. His will included a gift of £1000 to the Priory, of which 5 marks were to be used to complete the purchase of Bekesbourne.¹⁰²

In November 1448, Walsingham took out letters patent to exempt him from any future public service.¹⁰³ He must have been well over sixty by then, perhaps older – but for him, an era had ended with Beaufort's death. Harriss comments: 'the extent of the cardinal's 'affinity' and the nature of its service defies analysis', though he notes that certain individuals can be linked to it.¹⁰⁴ Walsingham must surely have regarded himself as a member of that affinity, and seen the Cardinal's gifts as confirmation of this.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown how Walsingham moved beyond the routine import/export of wine and wool to concentrate on his links with the royal household and with Cardinal Beaufort. His work as a tax-collector helped ensure loans to the French wars were repaid, and he used his own wealth to make loans in support of Beaufort's policies. He gave up the prospect of a city career to further these connections, but nonetheless remained in touch with his fellow-merchants and appears to have retained their trust. He acted as executor to the merchant William Estfield, also active in Beaufort's support. He evidently saw the gifts given to him by Estfield and Beaufort as confirming his acceptance in their 'circle', and ensured through his will that they would remain in the family.

Walsingham had become wealthy. He had acquired properties in London and was in a position to purchase a country estate. Walsingham's response to the opportunities afforded by these acquisitions is explored in the next two chapters.

¹⁰² Woodruff, 'Notes', p. 9. The remainder was to be used to repair the Cathedral fabric.

¹⁰³ *CPR 1441-1446* p.202.

¹⁰⁴ Harriss, p. 271.

CHAPTER 4

LONDON PLACES

This chapter explores Thomas Walsingham’s links with specific property in London. He acquired a number of city properties, but he also held two important leases – for ‘le Grenegate’ in Cornhill, and for a residence in the precinct of St Katherine’s Hospital.

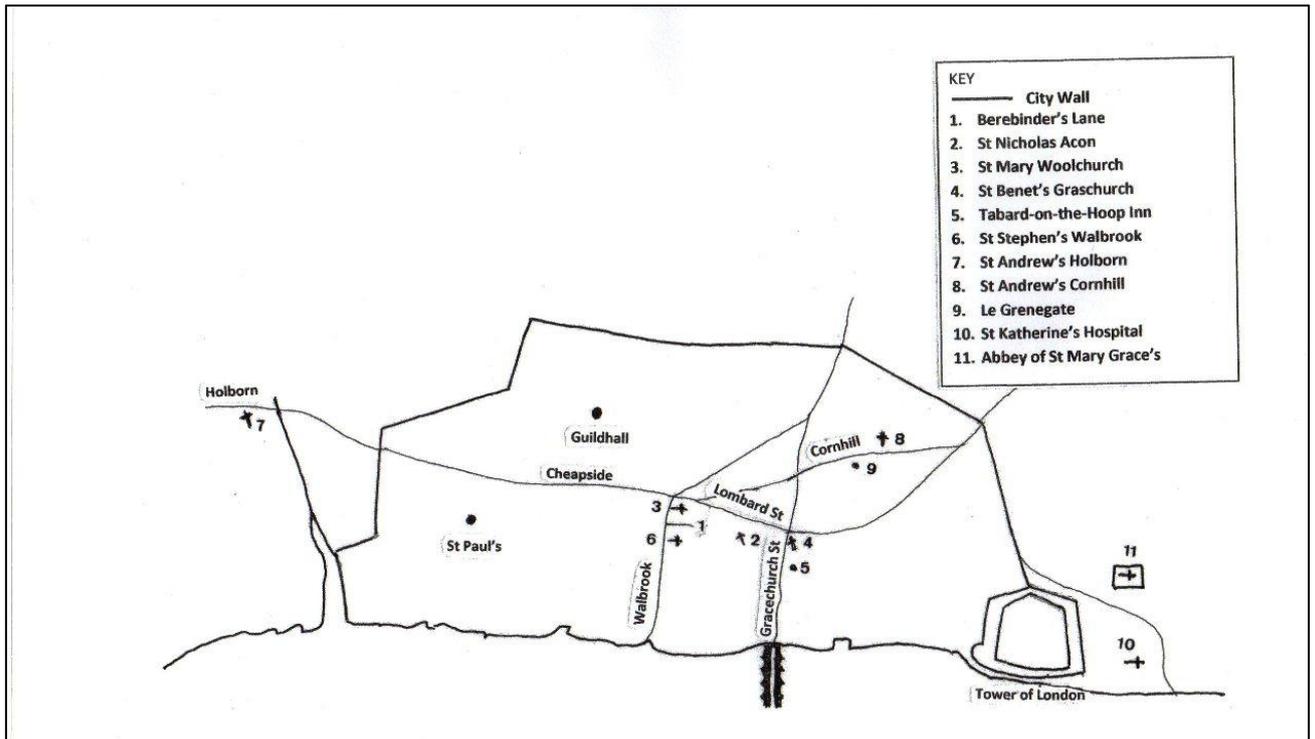


Figure 3: Sketch-map of London showing sites connected with Thomas Walsingham

Thomas’ first will of 30 March 1448 – made close to his retirement from public affairs - covers the distribution of his London property. The executors were his son Thomas, Thomas Ballard esquire, Richard Bamme and Master Nicholas Messingham, clerk – immediate family only. His son Thomas was the main beneficiary, but was still unmarried; if he had no heirs the property was to go to his sister Philippa Ballard; if she also had no heirs, it was to go to the ‘Master, Wardens and Company of the Mystery of Vintners in the city of London’ for the construction of a chapel in St Katherine’s-by-the-Tower.¹⁰⁵ The

¹⁰⁵ TNA PROB/11/2 (92); abstract in Webb, p. 374.

specifications for this chapel were lengthy. The properties named in the will are in three main locations: Berebinders Lane, Lombard Street and Gracechurch Street.

The Berebinders Lane property was in the parish of St Mary Woolchurch, but the precise location of the Walsingham tenement is unknown. Similarly, the location of the Lombard Street property in the parish of St Nicholas Acon, which the will states was acquired from Henry Somer, is unknown. Both were areas favoured by merchants, close to Cheapside and Bishopsgate.

John Wakele senior, Margaret Walsingham's former father-in-law, had settled property in Bevebynders Lane on his son and daughter-in law.¹⁰⁶ It seems likely that Walsingham acquired property there along with property in the parishes of St Stephen's Walbrook and St Mary Woolchurch following his marriage to Margaret.¹⁰⁷

Walsingham also acquired property in Holborn, in the parish of St Andrew Holborn; this is not included in his will, so must have been disposed of before 1448.¹⁰⁸

'LE FORGE... AND THE TABBARD-ON-THE-HOOPE'

More is known about the Gracechurch Street properties. These were in the parish of St Benet's Gracechurch. Thomas' father Alan may have been buried at St Benet's - included a bequest in his final will to 'the chercchewerke of Seint Benett's atte Graschirch'. Stow says that to the north, Gracechurch Street was composed of 'many faire houses for marchants and artificers, and many fayre innes for trauellers'.¹⁰⁹

The Walsingham properties included a tenement fronting the street, another tenement and shop called 'Le Forge', and an inn called 'the Tabbard-on-the-Hoope'. The shop le Forge was 19½ feet wide and 18 feet deep, so a good size; the space was presumably a

¹⁰⁶ Wakele's will: Sharpe, p. 367-373; <http://british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=66947> [accessed 28 Sept 2014].

¹⁰⁷ LMA X109 419 (HR 164/ 50 &, 51)

¹⁰⁸ LMA X109 418 (HR 158/78)

¹⁰⁹ Stow, 'Bishopsgate Ward': <http://british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=60033&strquery=Grassechurch> [accessed 27 October 2014].

working forge, providing farrier services for the inn.¹¹⁰ The Tabard-on-the-Hoop was well-known. The account-book of John Howard, Duke of Norfolk shows that in 1468-9 at the Tabard Inn, Gracechurch Street, a smith was paid 2s 8d for horseshoes, and the 'goodwife' 3s for a 'chamber'.¹¹¹ 'Hoop' in the name suggests that brewing took place on the premises.¹¹²

It is not possible to determine whether Thomas Walsingham actually lived at any of his properties, or whether they were rented out. It is possible that the family home was initially in Gracechurch Street (whether at the inn or another tenement); however, he went on to gain access to more prestigious properties through his connections with the royal household.

LE GRENEGATE

In 1406, Alan and Thomas Walsingham took a lease on 'le Grenegate' in the parish of St Andrew-upon-Cornhill.¹¹³ It evidently belonged to the Crown, as two years later Henry IV granted the lease to Thomas, 'my servant', for life.¹¹⁴ The property is described by Stow:

Then there is a fayre house of olde time called the greene gate; by which name one Michael Pistoy Lumbard held it, with a tenement and nine shops in the raigne of Richard the second, who in the 15th of his raigne [1391-92] gave it to Roger Crophull, and Thomas Bromester, esquires, by the name of the Greene gate, in the parish of St Andrew upon Cornhill, in Lime street ward; since the which time Philip Malpas, sometime alderman, and one of the Shiriffes, dwelt therein, and

¹¹⁰ LMA X109/416 (HR 133/76).

¹¹¹ C.L. Kingsford, 'Some Historical Notes on Medieval London Houses', *LTR* 12 (1920), p. 40; A. Crawford (ed.), *The Household Books of John Howard, Duke of Norfolk 1462-1471, 1481-1483* (Stroud, 1992), p. 530. The Inn is gazetteered in M.D. Lobel, *The British Atlas of Historic Towns Vol. III, The City of London from prehistoric times to 1520* (Oxford, 1989).

¹¹² J. Schofield, *London 1100-1600* (Sheffield, 2011), p.143.

¹¹³ LMA X 109/416 (HR 135/71).

¹¹⁴ *CPR 1405-1408*, p. 409.

was there robbed and spoyled of his goods to a great value by lacke Cade, and other rebels, in the yeare 1449...¹¹⁵

Although Stow does not mention Walsingham, the Patent Rolls make clear that the king granted le Grenegate to him in place of Brownfleet, and that it was a substantial property worth £10 a year; its size and situation made it an important acquisition.¹¹⁶ Walsingham may have given up the lease to Malpas in 1448, when he sought exemption from further public service.

‘MY DWELLING PLACE ATTE SENCT KATY’YNES W^T THE GARDYN’

At the time of his death, Walsingham’s main London residence was in a leased property in the precinct of St Katharine’s Hospital. This stood east of the Tower, outside the city walls and some distance from the commercial centre of London. His will shows that he was strongly attached to this extramural area, which contained both St Katharine’s church and Hospital and the Abbey of St Mary Graces.

Thomas’ 1457 will leaves to his son the outstanding lease at St Katharine’s: ‘I bequeath to my sonne Thomas alle the yeres that I haue comyng in my dwelling place atte senct Katy’ynes w^t the Gardyn and all other howses wtoute fynding alle manner of Rep’acions and paying the Rent yerly, which is iij^{li} xiiij^s iiij^d, as I haue alwey doo.’ The will lists household goods at St Katharines.

Thomas must have worshipped regularly at the church of St Katharine’s-by-the-Tower. He made a specific bequest to the church of the great service book he had used there, and a number of separate monetary bequests to the church and hospital – more than to any other religious foundation in London. Some were in return for prayers and services at his funeral and at the ‘month’s mind’, others for the hospital’s brothers and bedeswomen and the local poor. Three ‘cloths of gold of a sute’ were given for the Sepulchre, which he had previously lent each year.

¹¹⁵ Stow, ‘Limestreet Ward’, [http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=60032&strquery=Green Gate](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=60032&strquery=Green+Gate) [accessed 27 October 2014]

¹¹⁶ shown in Lobel, *Atlas* (1989) (as Mutas House’).

St Katharine's Hospital was initially founded in the 13th century by Queen Matilda as a corrody – a religious house required to support former royal servants for life. The obligation was later adapted to become a requirement to support a number of Brothers and Sisters. The Hospital was revitalised by Queen Philippa, wife of Edward III, who gave it new ordinances, appointed one of her servants as Master and supported the commissioning of a new church.¹¹⁷

By the mid-14th century former royal servants were offered the opportunity to pay to live in the precincts and build a house there at their own expense, as a way of improving the hospital's finances – after their death, the house would revert to the hospital and be available for rent.¹¹⁸ It is not possible to establish how many took this up. In 1399 John Sussex, draper, bequeathed his 'mansion' in the cloister to William Northampton, clerk of the King.¹¹⁹ Other residents were Thomas Chynnor, fishmonger, in 1459, and Thomas Bowest, one of the keepers of the King's Exchange, Money and Coinage at the Tower, who died there in 1479.¹²⁰ Some London wills express an interest in burial at St Katharine's, which may indicate residence in the precinct: for example the 1398 will of Paul Salesbury, esquire, makes bequests to the church and the poor bedefolk, and for the maintenance of a chantry there.¹²¹

The Hospital had strong Lancastrian links. John of Gaunt provided endowments, and his son John Beaufort, first husband of Margaret Holland, died there in 1410 after recurrent bouts of illness. Margaret arranged for a tomb with effigies of herself and her two husbands to be erected in Canterbury Cathedral (she died in 1439); John Holland, Duke of Exeter, Constable of the Tower, was buried at St Katharine's in 1447, in a tomb decorated with effigies of himself and his two wives.¹²²

¹¹⁷ VCH, *History of the County of London* Vol. I (1909), pp. 525-530; C. Jamison, *The History of the Royal Hospital of St Katharine by the Tower of London* (Oxford, 1952), p. 3 ff.

¹¹⁸ Jamison, *History*, p.129f.

¹¹⁹ Sharpe, pp. 345-351, <<http://british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=66945>> [accessed 25 April 2014].

¹²⁰ Jamison, *History*, p. 130.

¹²¹ Sharpe, pp. 345-351, <<http://british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=66942>> [accessed 25 April 2014].

¹²² M. Duffy, 'A Lancastrian Mausoleum', *Arch. Cant.* CXXIII (2003), pp. 309-331; Jamison, *History*, p. 151.

The 19th century construction of St Katharine's Dock obliterated all trace of the precinct. 16th-century maps and panoramas show clusters of houses around the church, each of at least two storeys with pitched roofs; the maps post-date Thomas' residence, and the area had become more densely populated by Tudor times, but they give an impression of how the precinct might have looked.¹²³ A drawing from 1810 shows buildings close by the church which may well incorporate earlier medieval timber-framing: they are substantial, of four storeys with exterior weatherboarding and gabled roofs.¹²⁴ The 15th-century residences are likely to have been relatively spacious and convenient; Thomas had a garden and outbuildings. There was access to the Thames, and the Customs House and wool-wharf were a short walk away. Residents were not troubled by City regulations. The Hospital, originally in Portsoken ward, had become established as the Liberty of St Katharine's by 1398. By 1440, under its Master Thomas Bekynton, Bishop of Bath and Wells and earlier Secretary to Henry VI, it had been given a new royal charter and was entirely outside the jurisdiction of the city.¹²⁵

One detail emerges from Thomas' 1457 will: he left money specifically 'to euery Brother and prest beinge in service of the Quire'. Stow observed that the St Katharine's choir 'of late years was not much inferior to that of Paules'.¹²⁶ Bekynton, Master until his death in 1446, may have been responsible for the development of the choir from which Walsingham benefited.¹²⁷ He left bequests to the St Katharine's clerks and choristers, and had been Commissioner for Henry VI's foundation at Eton – which also had a fine choir.¹²⁸

¹²³ The precinct and church are shown on eg. Braun & Hogenberg's Map of London, c.1570, and on Wyngaerde's Panorama of London, c. 1540.

¹²⁴ Reproduced in Jamison, *History*, Plate XVI.

¹²⁵ Jamison, *History*, p. 46 f.

¹²⁶ Stow, 'Portsoken Ward', <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=60029>> [accessed 27 October 2014].

¹²⁷ W. Dunning, 'Beckington, Thomas (1390?-1465)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1908>> (accessed 25 July 2014).

¹²⁸ K. Zieman, *Singing the New Song: Literacy and Liturgy in Late Medieval England* (Pennsylvania 2011), pp.25, 233 fn. 95, noting the suggestion that Bekynton may have re-founded the choir.

Thomas' access to the precinct must surely have derived directly from his service to the king, perhaps also to his links with Cardinal Beaufort. It seems probable that he was living there when Margaret died, as she was buried in the church - unless he worshipped at St Katharine's when living elsewhere, perhaps in order to establish a connection with the Hospital. He may have taken out - or been awarded - the lease on retirement from a specific post, perhaps after his long service as a Customs collector, or on his retirement as deputy butler. The lease did not lapse on his death, as the outstanding term is included in his 1457 will; it is not mentioned in his 1448 will.

'A GOOD PRAYER OFFRE FOR ME TO THE HEDDE OF SEINT ANNE'

Walsingham's will also makes bequests to the poor at the 'Newe Abbey atte the tourhill', asking that prayers be said for him to the head of St Anne.

The 'New Abbey' church, better known as St Mary Graces, stood on Tower Hill, north of St Katharine's and also outside the city wall. In 1361 Edward III had granted £100 for work on a new church for the Cistercian abbey, which enjoyed continuing royal support; obits for John of Gaunt and Henry IV were held there. The church was said to have been founded in honour of St Anne, though later dedicated to St Mary Graces, and to contain St Anne's head; but the authors of the excavation report (the abbey site – demolished at the Reformation and later used as a Royal Naval victualling ground – was excavated in the 1990s) could find no reference to the relic's existence after 1383.¹²⁹ Walsingham's will confirms that the head was still on display over seventy years later.

Walsingham was not the only St Katharine's resident to frequent the Abbey; Thomas Chynnor established a chantry there in 1442. Like St Katherine's, the Abbey had strong links with royal servants. Walsingham's associate Lewis John, Master of the Mints, was buried there in 1442.¹³⁰ Walsingham might have been gratified to know that his great-

¹²⁹ I. Grainger & C. Phillpotts, *The Cistercian Abbey of St Mary Graces, East Smithfield* (London, 2011), sets out the history of the Abbey. Relic of St Anne's head, p.15.

¹³⁰ Grainger & Philpotts, *St Mary Graces* (2011), p. 96.

grandson Sir Edmund Walsingham, Lieutenant of the Tower of London, would become Steward of the Abbey in 1533.¹³¹

CONCLUSION

Thomas Walsingham could undoubtedly have afforded to buy a fashionable property in the city; he would have been well aware of the substantial residences of his fellow-merchants, including those occupied by alien merchants (by 1485 the Contarini family leased a property with ten separate bedrooms in St Botolph's Lane, and no doubt had a similar residence in the 1440s).¹³² He appears to have placed greater value on his properties at le Grenegate, and later St Katharine's, and on the status he perceived his leases there to bestow; he reserved his household purchase for a country property. His practice of worship showed his attachment to St Katharine's and St Mary Graces, with their royal, and specifically Lancastrian, links.

In his wills, Walsingham left little to the City. Unlike most Londoners of his status, including Wych and Estfield, he made no bequests to religious foundations or hospitals across London. Unusually for a successful merchant, there was no direct bequest to his Company. There was no building project to parallel Estfield's conduit. The London poor benefited only at St Katharine's and St Mary Graces, though he also left a small bequest to 'my moste pouer ten^antz in London'. Thomas wanted to ensure his London assets were kept within the family; if the family line failed, the main beneficiary would be St Katharine's.

¹³¹ Grainger & Philpotts, *St Mary Graces* (2011), p. 94.

¹³² Littlehales, L.L. (ed.), *The Medieval Records of a London City Church, St Mary at Hill 1420-1559* (London, 1905), p. 26-55; <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=65690&strquery=Conteryn> [accessed 30 September 2014].



Figure 4: St Katharine's Church in 1810

Thomas asked to be buried in the chancel of St Katherine's church 'where Margaret my wife light'. Stow records: 'there lie buried in this church ... Thomas Walsingham, esquire, and Thomas Ballarde, esquire, by him, 1465'.¹³³

¹³³ Stow, (i), p. 124.

CHAPTER 5

KENTISH LEGACY

Instead of investing in a London home, Thomas channelled his resources into a country estate. This was a traditional way for merchants to establish their heirs as county gentry; it also provided a family base away from the disease of the city. Plague was an ever-present threat: Walsingham's 'view' for 1442-43 states that the merchants did no business in the city for six months 'due to the sickness which was in London', and went instead to the Cotswolds.¹³⁴ Thomas had no family ties outside London, so could settle wherever he chose.

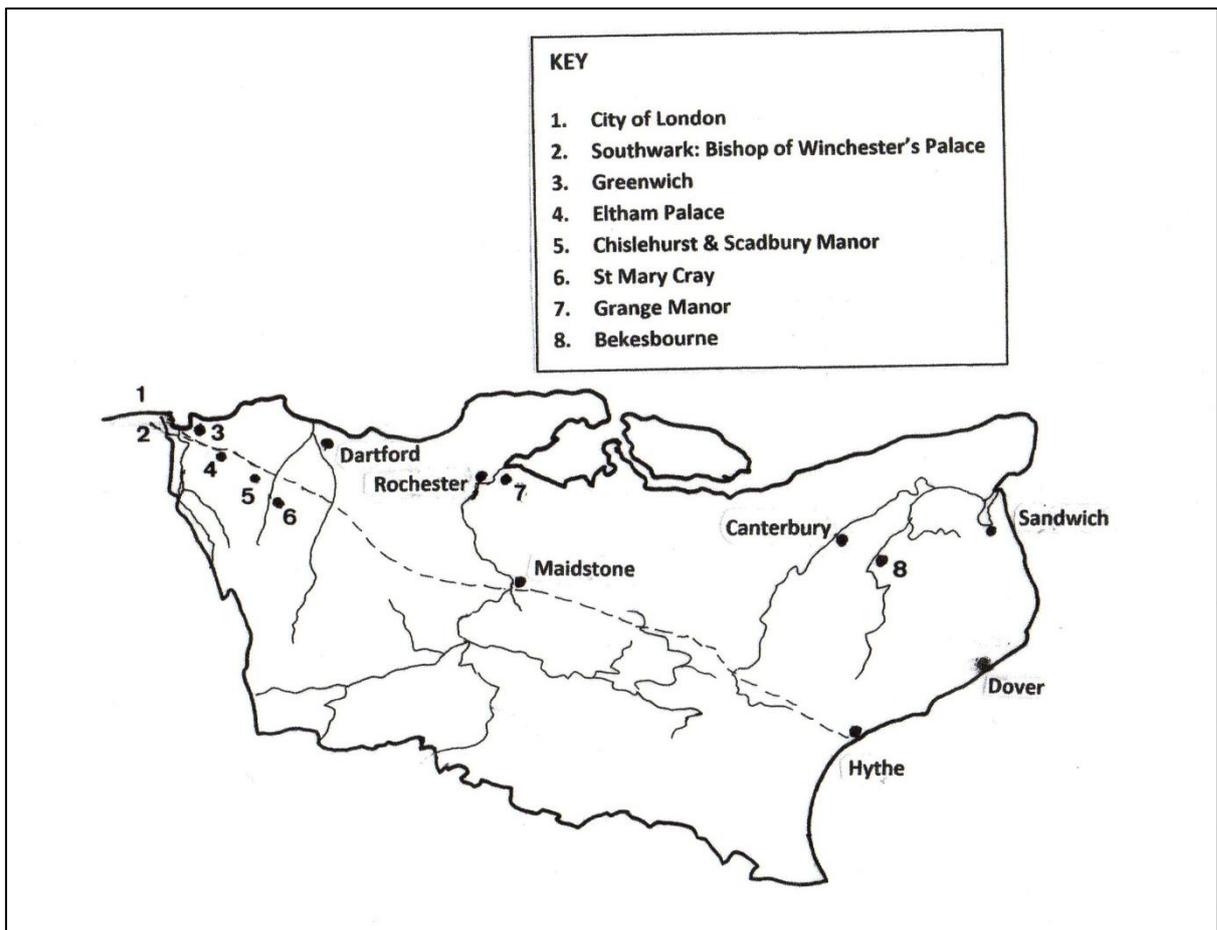


Figure 5: Map of Kent showing sites associated with Thomas Walsingham

¹³⁴ Bradley, p. 100.

'MY MANORS OF SCATHEBURY AND CHAMPEYNIS...'

Thomas Walsingham acquired his first country property in 1424: the manors of Scadbury and Champeyns in north-west Kent. Anne Brown argues that Kent was attractive to prospective purchasers because its tradition of gavelkind tenure meant land was freely negotiable on the open market.¹³⁵ While this was an advantage, Thomas' primary interest in Scadbury is likely to have been its location; he needed an estate which could support his London business. Scadbury was close to the main road from London, via Southwark and Eltham, to the Cinque Ports of Hythe and Folkestone, with onward links to Dover and Sandwich. The position was ideal for provisioning both the royal household (often based at Eltham Palace) and the Bishop of Winchester (frequently lodged at Winchester Palace in Southwark).

The transaction was between Thomas Dale, clerk, and Thomas and Margaret Walsingham.¹³⁶ The property included 'the manors of Scadbury and Champeyns with their appurtenances in the villages of Chislehurst, St Paul's Cray, Footscray, Lewisham and Bexley'. Dale was acting as feoffee for Alan Everard, a successful London mercer. Everard was three times warden of his Company (the mercer Nicholas Walsingham was his fellow-warden in 1396/7), MP for London in 1404 and 1414, and Sheriff of London in 1415-16; he was discharged as an alderman in 1419 on account of deafness. He may have used his wealth for property speculation.¹³⁷ Walsingham must have been known to him.

It is unclear how Everard had acquired these estates. Scadbury Manor, in the parish of Chislehurst, had been established in the 12th century by the de Scathebury family on land from neighbouring Kemnal Manor, but their male line died out in the early 14th century. There is no record of the estate after 1369.¹³⁸ Nothing is known about Champeyns, in St

¹³⁵ A. Brown, 'London and Northwest Kent in the Later Middle Ages: the Development of a Land Market', *Arch. Cant.* Vol. XCII (1974), pp. 145-155.

¹³⁶ Close Rolls 3 Hen VI, M.4.Dorse No 282, transcribed in Webb p. 350.

¹³⁷ HoP, 'Alan Everard'. <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/everard-alan-1426> [accessed 18 September 2014]

¹³⁸ Webb, p. 110.

Paul's Cray parish. It may originally have been part of St Paul's Cray manor, ascribed by Hasted to a family named de Campaigne.¹³⁹

The site of the Scadbury manor-house, the moat surrounding it and some 300 acres of the original estate survive in Scadbury Park Nature Reserve, now owned by Bromley London Borough. Pottery excavated at the site suggests the manor was first occupied in the later 12th century, and the moat and original manor-house complex must have been constructed around that time.¹⁴⁰ The de Scatheburys managed their land well. By 1301 John de Scathebury's assets were worth £22.3s, giving him the highest tax assessment in Chislehurst.¹⁴¹

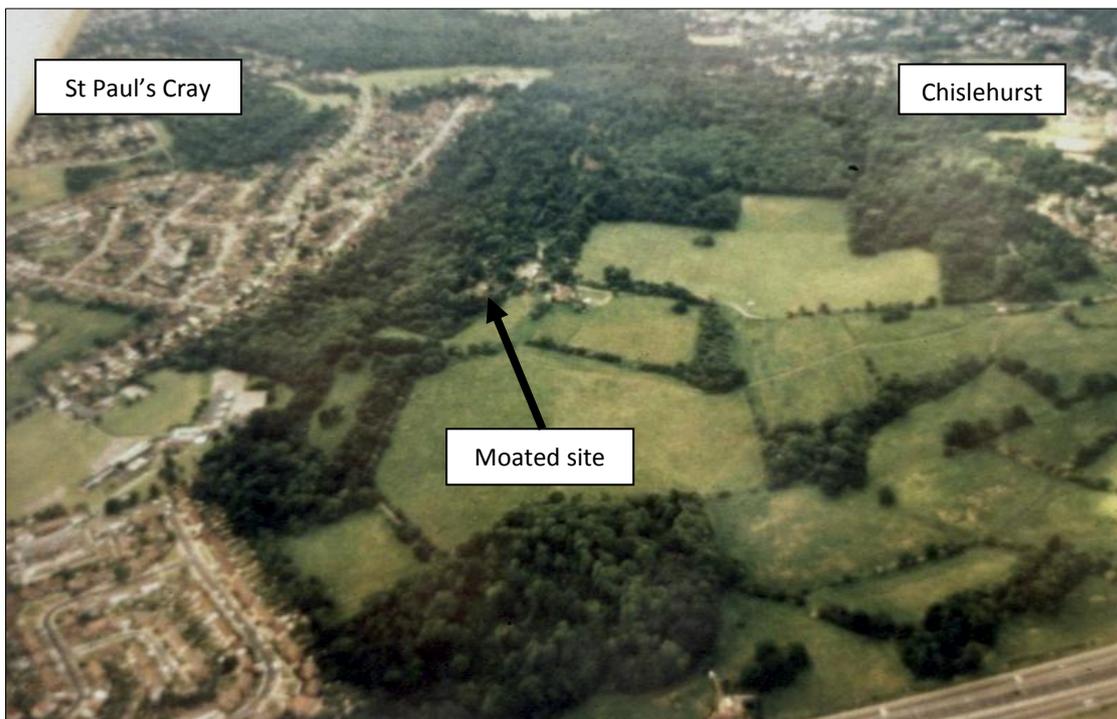


Figure 6: Aerial view of Scadbury Park looking west.

The manor stood on higher ground to the west of the Cray Valley. There was a hamlet, Perry Street, nearby, and a cluster of properties near Chislehurst parish church. The

¹³⁹ Hasted, II, p.127.

¹⁴⁰ F.A. Hart & S.M. Archer, *Scadbury Manor and its History and Archaeology* (ODAS, 2012), p.9.

¹⁴¹ The 1301 Lay Subsidy assessment for Ruxley Hundred: Webb, p.367.

manor of Chislehurst itself was retained by the Crown, and in Walsingham's time had been granted to the (non-resident) Hollands.¹⁴² In the Cray Valley, St Mary Cray village hosted a weekly market. The surrounding manors were largely held by non-resident landlords. The Walsinghams would have found few gentry families as neighbours; most local families were yeomen living in dispersed farmsteads.¹⁴³ They were almost certainly the wealthiest local residents.

'ALL MANER OF CATELL QUYK AND DED...'

It is likely that Thomas Walsingham employed a bailiff to manage his country estates, as did other London merchants such as Gilbert Maghfield.¹⁴⁴ Unfortunately no contemporary manorial records survive. The 1301 Lay Subsidy assessment shows that the de Scatheburys had practised mixed husbandry at Scadbury, in line with the mixed-husbandry regime then employed in much of Kent; this is likely to have continued under the Walsinghams.¹⁴⁵ Scadbury had its own fish-ponds, and must have been largely self-sufficient in terms of food.

¹⁴² Webb, p.12. Hasted, II, p. 3ff.

¹⁴³ Hasted, II, p.12-14.

¹⁴⁴ James, 'Gilbert Maghfeld', p.198.

¹⁴⁵ Mixed husbandry at Scadbury: A. Hart, *Excavations at Scadbury Part 2, Some Remains of Medieval Settlement* (ODAS 2011), p. 5f & p.34ff.; in Kent: B.M.S. Campbell, 'Agriculture in Kent in the High Middle Ages', in ed. S. Sweetinburgh, *Later Medieval Kent, 1220-1540* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp.25-53.



Figure 7: Oyster shells excavated at Scadbury

The Walsinghams could afford to buy in items not available from the estate, such as oysters and spices. There are no surviving household accounts, but butchered animal bones and oyster shells excavated at the site provide some evidence of what was consumed.¹⁴⁶

The 1301 subsidy assessment makes no reference to timber as a crop, yet this must have been a major resource for the Walsinghams. Much of the Scadbury estate was (and remains) covered by woodland. Timber trees would have been sold for building, locally or in the city; London coopers needed timber for wine and beer barrels; coppiced wood and brushwood provided tools, fencing, charcoal and firewood - the latter products also sought-after in London. Greenwich wharf was frequently used for transporting timber to London.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ A. Hart, *Excavations at Scadbury, Part 2: Some remains of Medieval Settlement* (ODAS, 2011) p.31 ff.

¹⁴⁷ Brown, 'Medieval Land Market' (1974), p.150-152; J. Galloway, D. Keene, M. Murphy, 'Fuelling the City: Production and Distribution of Firewood and Fuel in London's Region', *Economic History Review* 49 (1996), pp.447-472; Draper, G., 'Timber and Iron: Natural Resources for the Late Medieval Shipbuilding Industry in Kent' in S. Sweetinburgh (ed.), *Later Medieval Kent 1220-1540* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 55-77.

'ALLE MAN' OF HALLYNG AND BEDDING ...'

The manor house which the Walsinghams found on their arrival no longer survives; the island buildings were demolished in 1738. It would have been timber-framed, and is likely to have had a large hall with solar wing, buttery and pantry, perhaps also a detached kitchen with brew-house and dairy. A cistern collected rain-water. There would have been associated service buildings – granary, barns and stabling. The manor complex was surrounded by a moat some 7 metres wide.¹⁴⁸

Thomas Walsingham's final will gives some clues to the furnishings at Scadbury. He refers to items of silver and gilt, 'halling' and bedding, and napery; the house also contained brass, ironwork, pewter vessels, basins, lavours, chests, coffer 'and all other necessaries'. Scadbury had an almery – a lockable cupboard where precious belongings could be stored. None of these items survives, though excavation has provided evidence of everyday ceramic utensils.



Figure 8: Surrey white-ware decorated jug excavated at Scadbury

¹⁴⁸ A. Hart, *Excavations at Scadbury Part 2* (ODAS, 2011), p. 14ff; F. A. Hart & S. M. Archer, *Scadbury Manor* (ODAS, 2nd ed. 2012) p.9 ff.

'MY PREST ATTE SCADBURY'

There is no information on how much time the Walsinghams spent at Scadbury, but they certainly used it as a family home. Thomas' final will shows that he employed a priest there. Aspirational merchants frequently constructed private chapels on their estates, which might be free-standing or integrated into the house structure.¹⁴⁹ Richard Bamme inherited a detached chapel at Grange, as did Thomas Ballard at Horton.¹⁵⁰ At Scadbury the chapel is most likely to have been integral, as there are no foundations which could be interpreted as a detached chapel building.

Thomas' priest, Sir Thomas Sutton, was an executor of his 1450 and 1457 wills. Thomas bequeathed him a service-book and £3 6s 8d. He left to his son the service-book he himself used at Scadbury, which he had bought from the parson of Chislehurst.

'MY MANOR OF TUNG'

Thomas' 1451 will shows the full extent of his Kent holdings. Made in the year of the Cade rebellion, it may reflect concern about local unrest. It placed the Kent estates in trust for his unmarried son: the trustees were Thomas Ballard Esquire, Richard Bamme Esquire, Hugh Wych of London, Master Nicholas Messingham clerk, Sir Thomas Sutton chaplain, and Sir Walter Bowe, chaplain.

The trust deed, which describes the estates in detail, is set out in the Inquisition Post Mortem made following the death of Thomas Walsingham junior in 1467.¹⁵¹ It shows that the Walsinghams had acquired the nearby manor of Tung (Town Court), and had also consolidated their holdings by acquiring smaller parcels of local land through purchase or exchange. The outcome was a total estate worth 15 marks. Tung had its own farmhouse, and was probably farmed by a tenant.

¹⁴⁹ Evidence for private chapels from richer mercers' wills: Sutton, *Mercery*, p. 153.

¹⁵⁰ T. Tatton-Brown, 'Horton Manor', (1982), pp. 77-105.

¹⁵¹ Webb, p. 355.

By 1436 Walsingham was well-established in Kent. He – or just possibly, his son - served on royal commissions on Kent affairs with other Kent gentry, including Richard Bamme.¹⁵²

THE REDEVELOPMENT OF SCADBURY MANOR

During the 15th century the Scadbury manor-house was repaired, perhaps considerably remodelled, in brick. A broad date for the work can be obtained from a lead token excavated from the foundation-trench of a new buttressed brick wall built along the west side of the moat; on the obverse is a London cross-and-pellets design of 1425-1490.¹⁵³



Figure 9: Lead token excavated from the moat-wall trench

Brick was employed in quantity in London by the early 15th century, although it was not widely used elsewhere until the middle of the century.¹⁵⁴ The Walsinghams were wealthy enough to afford the latest fashion, and Thomas senior would have seen early brick buildings in London. However, it is not possible to establish definitively whether Scadbury was redeveloped in his life-time; it is possible the rebuilding was undertaken by his son and/or his grandson.

¹⁵² Eg *CPR 1429-1436*, p.533; *CPR 1436-9*, p.315.

¹⁵³ A. Hart, *Excavations at Scadbury, Part I: Excavations near the Island Wall* (ODAS, 2000), p. 24.

¹⁵⁴ J. Schofield, *London 1100-1600* (Sheffield, 2011), p.149.

Little is known about Thomas Walsingham junior, but he seems to have looked towards the local and county communities rather than to London – there is no evidence of him being active in the City, and no sign that he followed his father as a merchant. He appears as a feoffee in local Kent wills, and is referred to there as ‘gentilman’; he may have remained based at Scadbury, perhaps managing the estates for his father.¹⁵⁵ He did not marry until 1458, when he had benefited from his father’s will. His wife, Constance Dryland, was a widow and heiress from Davington in Kent. They had five children, but Thomas died in 1467.¹⁵⁶ Constance’s second husband John Green was Sheriff of Kent in 1476, and kept his shrievalty at Scadbury.¹⁵⁷

CHISLEHURST PARISH CHURCH

It is generally assumed that the Walsinghams, as the wealthiest resident parishioners, supported the rebuilding of St Nicholas’, the Chislehurst parish church, in Perpendicular style. The project is usually credited to rector Alan Porter (1446-1482).¹⁵⁸ None of Thomas’ wills include bequests for the church fabric, so it is possible that his son or even his grandson financed the work. It is not known whether the original church dedication was to St Nicholas, or whether – if the work was completed before 1471 - the church was re-dedicated then. St Nicholas was the patron saint of Henry VI and the Crown retained the manor of Chislehurst, though the advowson was held by Rochester Cathedral.

The north aisle of the remodelled church incorporated a Scadbury Chapel with a brick burial vault. The chapel also contains a decorated chest-tomb traditionally attributed to the early 15th century; whether this was intended for Thomas senior, who was of course buried in London, or for Thomas junior (or was constructed later), is unclear. Thomas

¹⁵⁵ Webb, Abstract of Wills, p. 393f: John Ferby of St Paul’s Cray, 1454, feoffee named as Thomas Walsingham junior; John Aylard of Chislehurst, 1465: ‘I wish Thomas Walsyngham gentilman, Robert Ballard, gentilman [Thomas Ballard’s son]...to be my feoffees’.

¹⁵⁶ Webb, p. 116.

¹⁵⁷ Hasted, vol.i, ‘General History of the Sheriffs of Kent’, pp.177-213, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=53762> [accessed 27 October, 2014].

¹⁵⁸ Webb, p. 18f; J. Newman, *West Kent and the Weald*, (2nd ed., Harmondsworth, 1976), p. 215.

Walsingham junior and future Walsinghams were all buried at Chislehurst, but the tomb was found to be empty when opened in 1956.¹⁵⁹

CONCLUSION

Scadbury and the associated Kent estates provided the Walsinghams with an income and a country base. The manor-house was conveniently sited for access to London, Southwark and to the royal household at Eltham, so supported Thomas Walsingham's career. The Ballards and the Bammes were easily accessible, as were their wharves. Although Thomas Walsingham junior did not become Sheriff of Kent - as Thomas Ballard and John Bamme both did - the Walsinghams were soon well-established in Kent affairs.

The acquisition of Kent property enabled Thomas Walsingham senior to fulfil the traditional London merchant's ambition: to establish his family as important members of a local community, and as influential members of the county gentry. His St Katharine's property nonetheless enabled him to retain his links with the royal household. The move to Kent was successful: the Walsingham family lived at Scadbury for over 200 years, and Thomas Walsingham's descendants played a major role in court life until 1660.

¹⁵⁹ Date attributed by Newman, *West Kent* (1976); but P. J. Tester, 'Recent Researches in Chislehurst Church', *Arch. Cant.* Vol. CII (1985), pp.1-4, notes that the brick vault could be 16th century, and that chest-tombs continued in use later in Kent than elsewhere; he concludes that the ages of tomb and vault 'remain undetermined'.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has shown how a close examination of the sources relating to Thomas Walsingham can further illuminate his life and career. From relatively humble origins as the son of a cordwainer Thomas was able to become a member of the Vintners' Company and to establish himself as a successful merchant – importing wine, but also exporting wool. By 1436 he was one of the richest merchants in London.

How did Thomas achieve his success? His early contact with the royal household was of fundamental importance in establishing his business. His relations with successive Chief Butlers were critical - first Gregory Ballard, then Payn and Chaucer. Walsingham showed he was able to settle Payn's affairs after his death, could handle financial transactions involving Chaucer, and Lewis John, and could negotiate potentially tricky relationships, using them to his own advantage. The link with Ballard secured his daughter's future. His administrative and financial skills, and perhaps his discretion, meant he survived the household's transition from Richard II to Henry IV and remained close to those furthering the cause of Prince Henry. These skills brought him to the notice of Henry Beaufort; again he moved beyond provisioning the household to give support in financial transactions and revenue collection, perhaps also to play a part in the export of Beaufort's wool. He was useful to the Cardinal in the achievement of his personal aims and wider policies.

Thomas Walsingham's relationships with the royal household, and specifically with the circle which gathered around Beaufort, brought considerable reward. By 1436 he was worth £90 a year. He had acquired some London property, but had also been granted a prestigious lease in central London – le Grengate – by the King. His connections enabled him to acquire a further lease in the precinct of St Katharine's Hospital – a foundation with royal, and specifically Lancastrian, links. Walsingham placed great value on his connection with St Katharine's. He worshipped in St Katharine's church; he and his wife were both buried there. He gave the church and hospital extensive bequests, and they

were to receive his London assets should his children have no heirs. He also worshipped at nearby St Mary Graces, which also had strong links to the Crown.

Walsingham's service brought obligations as well as benefits - he gave up civic advancement in order to support the Crown's (and Beaufort's) policies in France. Most London merchants did not follow this path. While wealthier merchants were routinely engaged in provisioning the royal household with wine and luxury goods, or securing elaborate jewellery, cloths and vestments for the Great Wardrobe, most saw their main focus as the city of London itself, and sought advancement through civic service.

Walsingham's closest city colleagues became aldermen, sheriffs and mayors, and MPs for London – their interest was in benefiting the City. Walsingham served as a MP, but outside London. It is impossible to know how far he was personally committed to Beaufort's policies. He succeeded in keeping on good terms with his fellow-citizens, as well as with those in the circle of Cardinal Beaufort; Beaufort's gifts were clearly of the highest importance to him, providing an affirmation of his career choices.

While the benefits of Walsingham's chosen could be considerable, there were also risks. Financial difficulty and even ruin faced merchants whose credit to the royal household was not repaid, whose trading was disrupted by war, or who made loans on sureties which could not be realised. Gilbert Maghfield was ultimately almost bankrupted by his court connections and his failure to achieve repayment of his debts. Walsingham avoided these risks. He was well-organised; he kept a close watch on his finances throughout his life. He must have been a reliable tax-collector: his 'views' are clearly presented and – unlike most returns, which require the reader to make a calculation – state plainly whether the merchants had met the requirement that more should be bought in England than was sold. He seems to have retained his contacts throughout his life. His wills reflect this; bequests are kept within a tight group of family and trusted colleagues.

Walsingham seems to have been content with a relatively modest lifestyle in London and Kent. His manor-house at Scadbury was comfortable, but not especially large or luxurious; it was certainly remodelled, but modestly – and possibly by his successors. It is unfortunate that no material objects can be specifically associated with him, and that the items listed in his wills do not survive; however, excavation at Scadbury provides some

insight into the life of the Walsingham family there, and other objects – such as the Ballard mazer and seal – give an indication of the possessions owned by family members.

In London, Walsingham's wills provide some useful insight into the operation of St Katharine's Hospital in the mid-15th century, for which limited documentary evidence survives. The wills also cast light on details (the choir, the relics) at St Katharine's and St Mary Graces.

An examination of Walsingham's career gives an interesting insight into how an individual merchant operated, but can it throw any light more widely on merchants in 15th century London? Walsingham's career was exceptional – very few fellow-merchants became so closely identified with the royal household – but it indicates what alternatives were open to London citizens. Although the information remains fragmentary, it is possible to use Walsingham's career to observe how Cardinal Beaufort, and those around him, managed their links with city merchants during a period of great uncertainty. Walsingham is one of only a handful of merchants (including Hugh Dyke and William Estfield) who can be firmly linked to Beaufort. Their trading skills, but also their financial acumen and ability to recoup revenue through tax-collection, were of great importance to Beaufort in the furtherance of his aims – but neither Dyke nor Estfield chose to mirror Walsingham's career path.

Although Walsingham was not knighted, and did not hold office in Kent, his shrewd management of his affairs provided a sound foundation for his family. Few merchants' families can be traced beyond one or two generations; Thomas Walsingham's descendants held significant roles at court and in Kent for the next two hundred years.

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ANNEX: THOMAS WALSINGHAM'S WILL OF 1457

[This transcript is based on that in Webb, p. 375 , with corrections made from TNA PROB 11/ 2 (92). The original text is continuous.]

In the name of Ihu. the glorious and blessed virgine, his blessid moder Marie, Seynt Anne, saint Kath'ine, and the glorious martir senct Thomas of Canterbury, Amen. I Thomas Walsingham squier and citezin of London myghty of mende and in good memorie, being the xvth Day of March and yer' of oure Lord m.cccc and lvj^{ty} And the yer of King Henry the sext the xxxv^{ty}. I be gynne make ordeyn and dispose my p'sent testament of my last wille in maner and fourme following, that is to sey ffirst, I bequeth my soule to Almyghti god in Trinite My Creator' and my Sauyr and to his blissid moder marie and to alle the holy Companye of heven and my body to be Buried wt'in the Chauncell of Seint Katrine where Margaret my wife light

ITM I bequeth to the Master of the saide Place of Seynt Kat'ines for the place of my sepultur in the fourme a foresaide to be had and my Offeryings foryeteyn in discharge of my soule and for to pray for my soule xiiij^s iij^d. ITM I bequeath to the vse of the Church of Seinct Katherine my grett portous that I have vsid to lye afore me and to sey on my s'uice.

ITM I bequeth to the vse of the saide chirch of Senct Kat'ines iij clothis of gold of a sute Which I haue yerly lent to the Sepulcre, and I wil the same iij clothis be occupied to the saide vse.

Itm. I bequeth to euery Brother and prest beinge in service of the Quire to be payde at the day of my sepultur iij^s iij^d. Itm. In the same wise atte the monyth daye to euery prest and Brother iij^s iij^d.

Itm. To euery clerke atte the saide ij tymes xx^d, and to euery Sustyr atte the saide ij tymes xx^d, and to euery Bedwoman atte ij tymes viij^d.

Itm. I bequeth vnto my Sonne Thomas to be delyuered vnto hym anoon ypon my deceste to s'ue god in fo'rme of myn accustome, and to haue me in minde, my Portos that I sey on my s'uice at Skatbury which I bought of the p'son of Chekilhirst, And also a payre Bedez of

Ambre with a balle of muske in the ende which my lord Cardynalle gave me, to this entente that he noo wise alien the saide bedes, but perpetually to conveye hem to his owen vse and Issue yf god sende him any matrymonyaly, And yf he Dye w^toute, that the saide bedes turne to his sustyr Philip and her Issue. Also I bequeth to Thomas Ballard the grete Bibille that my lorde Cardinale gave me wretyn of boleyne hand.

Also I bequeth to John Langhirst v marke. Also to John Corner v marc And to Robert Cook xl^s and pardon of v marke that Langhirst owight me of money lent, and pardon to John Corner of alle that he owight me. Also I bequeth to be distributyd amongis myn other s'uaunts that haue lengist seruid me, as wele atte Scatbury as atte London, by thatwise of my sonne Thomas and the Remenaunt of my executors, vj^{li} xiiij^s iiij^d. Also I bequeth to my doughter Phelip the Borde cloth and the towell that I hadde of S^r William Estfeld. Itm. to Thomas Ballard my suyte Cuppe.

Itm. to the P'son of Chikishurst for my tithis foryete and to P^ray for me xiiij^s iiij^d. Itm. To the churchewerke of Seint Benett's atte Graschirch in london vj^s viij^d Itm. to S^r Thomas Sutton my prest atte Scatbury iij^{li} vj^s viij^d and the Portos that he saith oon his s'ice.

Itm. I bequeth to be distributyd amonge my moste poure ten^antz in London and the moste nedy p'sones, men and women, in the p'isse of Chikishurst, and Fotiscray, and Powliscraye, by the avise of myn executu^rs by the report of the p'sons of the saide churches vj^{li} iij^s iiij^d. Furthermore, as for the Forme at my departing oute of this worlde, I wil that the tyme of my sepultur and the monyth day after be obserued after the fourme and maner that I did for my wife, and Rather lasse in charge than more, which fourme w^t alle the Dispenses are redy wretyn and Remayne of recorde.

Itm. I wil that in the daye of Sepultur be distributyd amondge the moste nedy p'sones men and women, dwelling w^t in senct Kat'ines and aboute the nedy Abbey xiiij^s iiij^d.

Itm. I bequeth to my cosyn Maister Nicholas Messingh^am my Fader Bibill coverid in white lethir w^t claspes of Siluer and gilt, and myn [hugussion] lying in the Almerie atte Scatburie, and Remise and release him all the money that he owight me.

Itm. I bequeth to my sonne Thomas alle the yerest that I haue comyng in my dwelling place atte senct Kat'ynes w^t the Gardyn and all other howses wtoute fynding alle manner

of Rep'acions and paying the Rent yerly, which is iij^s iiij^d, as I haue alwey doo. And be side every yere atte Cristemasse to the Bretheren vj^s vii^d.

Itm. i bequeth to my saide Sonne all maner of Halling and Bedding accustomed to the saide place w^t other hustilments of Brasse, Iryn, Peautr Vessell, Basins and lavours vsed and app'teynyng to the saide place w^t alle maner chests, cofers and other necessaries leying in the same place.

Itm. I bequeth to my saide Sonne alle man' of hallyng and bedding accustomed to the saide place of Scadbury w^t alle other hustylments of Brasse, Irin werke, Peautre vessel, Basins, Lavours, Chests, cofours, and alle other necessaries being in the saide place the day of my departyng oute of this world.

Itm. I bequeth to my saide Sonne all maner of Catell quyk and ded that I leve vpon my Maner of Scatbury and Tunge.

Itm. I bequeth to my saide Sonne alle my syluer and gilt vessell holy to himself, Except that I haue bequeth to Thomas Ballard and to my Gosship Chirches wif.

Itm. I bequeth to my saide sonne and to his suster Philp alle my napery of Reynes and of werk w^t alle my shetys of Reynes and other fynne cloth of iij leues, and of ij leues being at Seint Kat'ines and atte Scatbury even to be departyd betwene hem.

Itm. I bequeth to my Gossip Chirches wif a litill gilt cuppe couered, which I hadded of the yefte of William Michell.

Itm. I wil and charge myn executo^rs that by an hoole yer after my decesse my fourme accustomed to the Newe Abbey atte tourhill, that is to sey euey Sat'day some devoute and good p'sone go to the saide Abbey, and w^t a good prayer offre for me to the hedde of Seint Anne 1^d, and ther to the parte to xv pour men and women most in need recouring co'tynuelly to the saide Abbey, y^t is to sey to every p'sone 1^d, and also every Sat'day to offer to Seint Kat'ine j^d, and euey Sat'day to put in the Bedwomen box v^d, and this to endur by an hoole yer aftre my decesse.

Itm. I will that my sonne Thom^as be not charged w^t noon anuyteis to ber out of my Rents and tenements in London to fynding of Prests, thowe so be that I were some tyme other

wise pr'posid and avisid, as it apperith in my wil and devise of the saide londis and tenements.

Itm. I wil and charge alle myn executo^rs that all my detts which at my discese as it may apper by a byll of Engrosemēt that I haue accustomed me to vse evermore at Ester to knowe what I owe and what me is owing, that they be trewly content, and noon other that are declared in the same byll, For vpon the feith I owe to god I stonde of right charged to noo body ertly more than is declared in the saide byll. And this byllis remayne of Recorde from Esterne to Esterne Sithens the yere of our Lord m^lcccc xxv^{ty}, at which tyme I be gan that fourme.

The Residue of all my goods, that is to sey all maner of Detts and money beying in my awarde at my discese ower all the stor of alle my both houtholdes atte seint Kat'ines and at Scadbury, and also the Quyk cataille and ded being atte Scatbury and Tunge, as it is declared befor fully remain to my sonne Thomas w^t these condicions that he see my trewe detts payed and contont, and my bequests p'formed, as he wil answer at the day of Jugement, and for the p'fourmyng of all this my last will a for declared I demise, ordeyn for myn executo^rs my sonne Thomas Walsyngh^am, my sonne Thomas Ballard, and my cosyne Maister Nichol m, requiring and praying hem that alle this my wil afore declared be p'fith executyd and inesspeciall to my sonne Thomas, for he is in moste prevayle.