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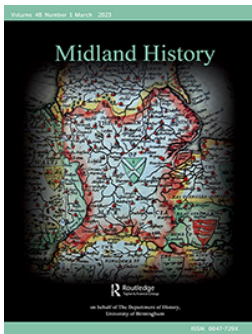
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A High Street Inheritance: Henley-in-Arden in 1419-20

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ABSTRACT

The contents of a previously overlooked rental of the borough of Henley-in-Arden, composed in 1419–20 when the co-heirs to the Freville lands were trying to decide how to share out their inheritance, are presented and discussed. Rare in the combination of its extent and date, it provides an important view of tenurial arrangements in the borough in the aftermath of the plague outbreaks of the previous seventy years. Some elements of continuity can be identified, but the dominant impression is of major alterations having occurred in the relationship between the owner and his tenants. The survey's significance is also considered in the wider context of the history of late medieval urbanism in the west midland region.

KEYWORDS

Henley-in-Arden;
Beaudesert; Freville;
borough; rental; plague

Henley-in-Arden is one of many small market towns in the west midlands which were created in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It is located at the southern edge of the Arden district of north Warwickshire on the main through-route between Stratford-upon-Avon and Birmingham, and its other neighbours – and commercial competitors – of medieval origin included Bromsgrove, Alcester and Warwick.

It is not known either when or by whom a borough was created at Henley, nor if it had the status of a borough from the outset, although it has been generally assumed that it was founded by the lord of the nearby castle of Beaudesert. No foundation charter exists; but in 1296 there were said to be sixty-nine burgesses there.¹ Early maps suggest an original regular plan, with an elongated market-place set along the important north-south road which formed its main axis (Figure. 1).² Such market-places, often described as ‘cigar-shaped’, were characteristically colonized by a central row of booths, which were at first temporary but became permanent. Henley’s is still detectable in its modern topography, as is true of many better known instances elsewhere, but an unusual feature of it is that all through-traffic is confined to the western side of this former central row. The eastern side is now a minor cul-de-sac, blocked off at its southern end by the westernmost part of St John’s church.

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¹On the link with Beaudesert see, for example, M. Beresford, *New Towns of the Middle Ages: Town Plantation in England, Wales and Gascony* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1967), pp. 139, 249; *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, Volume 3, Edward I* (London: HMSO, 1912), pp. 224–5 (no. 364), at p. 225.

²Today the A3400, but formerly the A34, which runs north to Birmingham and south-east to Stratford-upon-Avon. For comparisons with some other town plans in the west midlands see, for example, T. R. Slater, *Field and Forest: an Historical Geography of Warwickshire and Worcestershire* (Norwich: Geo Books, 1982), pp. 183, 189, 192.

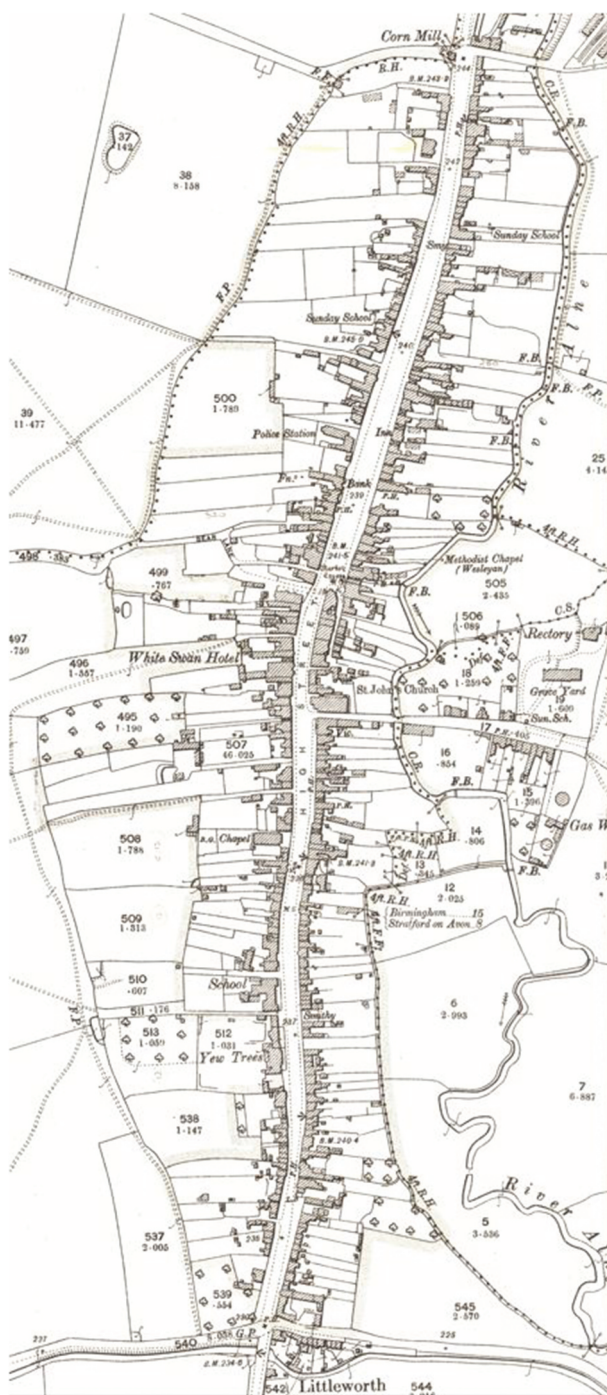


Figure 1. The area of the former medieval borough of Henley-in-Arden. Taken from the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 County Series, Warwickshire sheet XXXI.12 (2nd edn, 1905).

As already noted, the identity of the planned layout's creator is unknown. Circumstantial evidence suggests, however, that the initial phase dates to the late twelfth century or very early in the thirteenth.³ It seems probable that it was founded by one of the Montfort family to whom the earls of Stafford leased the manor of Henley and associated lands west of the River Alne within that period; the Montforts also held the adjoining manor of Beaudesert from the earls of Warwick. The site of Henley, adjoining the Montfort manor of Beaudesert and laid out along the main road west of the Alne, is a classic position for a late medieval town. In 1296 John de Montfort received rent from sixty-nine burgesses in Henley, but it is impossible to say how this figure of sixty-nine relates to the original number of plots laid out to either side of High Street.

There is little useful medieval documentation for the borough at Henley – no court or financial records such as survive for some other boroughs. What we do have mainly comprises deeds (some of which have been calendared), the lay subsidy rolls, inquisitions post mortem, and feet of fines.⁴ The recent discovery of a previously overlooked rental of Henley, dated to 1419–20, is therefore potentially of great value for an enhanced understanding of the borough's medieval history. It is also a rare document of its date – early fifteenth-century – for a small town in the west midlands. A transcription and translation of the rental are therefore provided in this article. They are preceded by an account of the provenance of the manuscript and of the manorial history which led to its compilation, as well as an analysis of what the rental tells us about the properties listed and the people living in them. This is followed by a discussion about the rents paid in 1419–20, the possible reasons for their diversity, and their significance for the history of small towns in the west midlands in the fifteenth century.

The Freville Inheritance

The rental of Henley is preserved among the family and estate papers of the Willoughby family, Lords Middleton, of Wollaton (Notts.), Middleton (Warwicks.) and Birdsall (N. Yorks.), kept in the Manuscripts and Special Collections at the University of Nottingham (Plate 1).⁵ The Willoughby family paid careful attention to the preservation of their archives.⁶ They took their title from the manor of Middleton, part of which they inherited through the

³It was in existence by 1221: T. D. Hardy, ed., *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum* (2 vols, London, 1833–44), I, 463b.

⁴There are twenty-two entries in respect of properties in Henley in the calendared feet of fines for Warwickshire, ranging in date from 1202 to 1502. Not one of them can be certainly identified as being within the borough rather than in the rest of the manor, and they contain almost no information of value for the present study. The latest one (of 1502) lumps together property of various kinds in eight manors, including two burgages; and Henley is the only one of these manors known ever to have contained a borough: L. Drucker, *Warwickshire Feet of Fines*, III, Dugdale Soc., XVIII (London: 1943), p. 218 (no. 2787). It is interesting that burgages – not previously mentioned in the fines – were, it seems, still so called at Henley in the early sixteenth century. There are also deeds in the calendars published for the Public Record Office (now TNA) in the twentieth century, but these calendars did not cover all the classes of deeds in TNA; for example, the volumes of *Cartae Miscellaneae* E 315/31 to E 315/54 have not yet been calendared. Deeds consulted in King's College, Cambridge, lack a calendar. For examples of what can be found when documents such as court rolls survive: C. Dyer, *Peasants Making History: Living in an English Region 1200–1540* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), pp. 244–9, as an example of information on commerce and occupations in towns which is available from court rolls.

⁵The authors are grateful to the University of Nottingham, and particularly to Miss Jayne Amat, Archives Assistant, for assistance with photostats of relevant documents and information about them. C. Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: a Study of Land and Society in Warwickshire, 1401–1499* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 167, cites the manuscript with reference to a pasture in Henley but makes no reference to the rental of the borough of Henley.

⁶W. H. Stevenson ed., *Report on the manuscripts of Lord Middleton preserved at Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire*, Historical Manuscripts Commission (London: HMSO, 1911), pp. v–vi.

marriage, in 1418,⁷ of Hugh Willoughby to Margaret Freville, one of the co-heirs of the last in the male line of Freville. The heading of one of the two manuscripts in which the rental appears (the other one is damaged, with the heading and some of the text missing), has the title ‘Thamworth’ and describes what follows as an ‘extent’ of the castle, manor, lands and tenements of the heirs of the late Baldwin Freville, made at Tamworth and elsewhere (*alibi*) in the seventh year of the reign of Henry V on Thursday in the feast of the exaltation of the Holy Cross, i.e. 14 September 1419.⁸ The introduction names Baldwin’s heirs and also the people whom they commissioned to undertake the extent and in whose presence it was made, listening to the testimony of twelve un-named jurors. It is obvious that the document (a long roll formed of lengths of parchment sewn together) was made at a time when the two surviving Freville sisters, with their husbands and with the father and guardian of the infant son of a third sister, were deciding how to divide the Freville inheritance. The two manuscripts in which the Henley rental appears also include the manors of Tamworth and Warton, which went to Elizabeth Freville, married to Thomas Ferrers, Middleton and Gunthorp (Notts.), which went to Margaret Freville, and Henley and associated lands, which went to Robert Aston, infant son and heir of the third sister, Joyce.⁹ The two copies of the rental were written by different scribes; there are distinct differences between their hands (for example, in the capital letters B, G, N and P).

There is no indication of the date when the commissioners reached Henley. The rental is preceded by an account of the buildings within Beaudesert castle (the stable of which was said to be in a ruinous condition), with the value of the castle being given as nothing, and by a list of rents from lands. These include some known from other sources to have been held of the barony of Stafford, which reflects the complex manorial relationships in the area, with Beaudesert being held from the earls of Warwick. The commissioners were obviously interested in the value of the borough of Henley and seem to have used a rental to provide that figure. It may have been based on earlier documents but seems to have been a current record. One of the tenants was Agnes, widow of Richard Cokkes; Richard is recorded as one of the jurors in inquisitions held in 1418 and presumably died between then and the rental’s compilation.

This account of the rental’s provenance hides the complex tenorial history of Henley and the adjoining manor of Beaudesert. A member of the Freville family married one of the two sisters of the last of the legitimate male line of the Montfort family, Peter de Montfort III, who held Henley from the earl of Stafford and Beaudesert from the earl of Warwick; the other sister married a member of the Sudeley family, whose heiress married into the Boteler family. Peter’s son Guy predeceased him in 1361.¹⁰ The arrangements which Peter made for parts of his inheritance complicated the situation. In 1326 he made an agreement whereby, if he died without heirs of his body, the lands which he held in parts of Ullenhall and Wootton Wawen (Warwicks.), together with what was described as the borough of Henley-in-Arden, would revert to John, son of Lora of Ullenhall, and John’s

⁷S. J. Payling, ‘Willoughby family (per. 1362–1528)’, <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/52802>> [accessed 1 July 2022].

⁸University of Nottingham (UoN), Middleton MSS, Mi M 214; the damaged MS is Mi M 175.

⁹Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Record Office (SBTRO), DR 10/1316.

¹⁰Victoria County Histories (VCH), P. Styles, ed., *Warwickshire*, III (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), pp. 45–9, at p. 46. For Peter de Montfort’s sisters: W. Dugdale, *The Antiquities of Warwickshire* (London: Thomas Warren, 1656), p. 592.

descendants.¹¹ John, it appears, was Peter's illegitimate son; he married into a family in Coleshill (Warwicks.), and had a son called Baldwin Mountford, who in turn was succeeded by a son called William.¹² In 1349 Peter provided for his legitimate son Guy to inherit the manor of Beaudesert. If Guy had no children Beaudesert was to revert to the family's overlord, the earl of Warwick, one of whose daughters Guy had married. Guy died without children and before his father. Although Peter's two sisters were not heirs of his body, their descendants, Baldwin Freville and Thomas Boteler, laid claim to Henley. They seem to have been supported by successive earls of Warwick, who were presumably mindful of the family connection (through the marriage of Guy de Montfort) in exercising power and patronage in the county and beyond.¹³

On the death of Ralph earl of Stafford in 1372 it was recorded that Baldwin Freville was holding Henley-in-Arden, and when his successor, Hugh earl of Stafford, died in 1386 Baldwin Freville was again recorded as holding a knight's fee in Henley-in-Arden. However, by 1392, when Thomas earl of Stafford died, Henley was being held by William Beauchamp.¹⁴ Three years before the inquisition into the lands of Ralph earl of Stafford an inquisition into the lands of Thomas earl of Warwick, who died in 1369, stated that Beaudesert was part of the Warwick earldom, held directly from the king, but also that the earl of Warwick held Henley from the earldom of Stafford.¹⁵ This latter statement may be the basis on which the earl of Warwick intervened in the dispute over succession to Henley and granted both Henley and Beaudesert for life to his brother William Beauchamp, Lord Bergavenny. This might have been a price exacted for supporting the joint Boteler and Freville claim to Henley. In 1394 the earl of Warwick made an agreement with Thomas Boteler and Baldwin Freville that they could inherit Beaudesert jointly after his brother's death, and that if either of them failed to have an heir of his body, the other would inherit the whole of Beaudesert.¹⁶ Baldwin Freville died in 1401 – the inquisition held after his death made no reference to Henley or Beaudesert – and was succeeded by his son, another Baldwin, who was a small child.¹⁷ Thomas Boteler died in 1414, when the Crown acknowledged the 1394 agreement over the division of Beaudesert between the Boteler and Freville families.¹⁸ The jurors who held a second inquisition (*que plura*) into Lord Bergavenny's lands in

¹¹This is described in the inquisition post mortem for William Beauchamp, Lord Bergavenny in 1412: J. L. Kirby, 'Inquisitions Post Mortem, Henry IV, Entries 800–860', in *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem: Volume 19, Henry IV* (London: HMSO, 1992), pp. 289–306, at pp. 302–3 (no. 846). The original deed is in the British Library, Cotton Charter XXVII 137.

¹²VCH, L. F. Salzman, ed., *Warwickshire*, IV (London, 1947), pp. 47–57, at p. 50.

¹³For an account of the influence of the earls of Warwick in the fifteenth century, and accounts of Warwickshire gentry as they competed for land and patronage: Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, *passim*.

¹⁴A. E. Stamp, J. B. W. Chapman, M. C. B. Dawes and D. B. Wardle, 'Inquisitions Post Mortem, Edward III, File 230', in *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem: Volume 13, Edward III* (London: HMSO, 1954), pp. 178–95, at p. 187 (no. 210); M. C. B. Dawes, M. R. Devine, H. E. Jones and M. J. Post, 'Inquisitions Post Mortem, Richard II, File 47', in *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem: Volume 16, Richard II* (London: HMSO, 1974), pp. 159–72, at p. 163 (no. 440); M. C. B. Dawes, H. C. Johnson, M. M. Condon, C. A. Cook and H. E. Jones, 'Inquisitions Post Mortem, Richard II, Files 76 and 77', in *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, Volume 17, Richard II* (London: HMSO, 1988), pp. 88–109, at p. 102 (no. 224).

¹⁵M. C. B. Dawes and J. B. W. Chapman, 'Inquisitions Post Mortem, Edward III, File 207', in *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem: Volume 12, Edward III* (London: HMSO, 1938), pp. 300–14, at pp. 309–10.

¹⁶Kirby, 'Inquisitions Post Mortem, Henry IV, Entries 800–860', pp. 302–3 (no. 846).

¹⁷J. L. Kirby, 'Inquisitions Post Mortem, Henry IV, Entries 400–446', in *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem: Volume 18, Henry IV* (London: HMSO, 1987), pp. 125–44, at p. 134–5 (nos 422–5). The age of his son and heir is given variously as two, four and five.

¹⁸*Calendar of Close Rolls 1413–1419* (London: HMSO, 1929), pp. 136–7.

1412 knew of the 1394 agreement and recognized the Boteler and Freville families as heirs to Beaudesert. They also knew of the inquisition of 1369. They reported that William Beauchamp (Lord Bergavenny) had been an ‘intruder’ into Henley (and other lands held from the barony of Stafford), and that an agreement had been reached whereby he was to hold Henley and these other lands for life. They added that since Lord Bergavenny’s death William Mountford was heir to Henley and had taken possession of it.¹⁹ They did not refer to the Boteler and Freville claim to Henley.²⁰

However, it appears that the earl of Warwick was prepared to use his influence to support the Boteler and Freville claim to Henley as well as to Beaudesert. The Mountford claim to Henley was overturned during legal proceedings after the death of Lord Bergavenny,²¹ and by the time of the rental of Henley in 1419–20 the dispute over it had been resolved in favour of the Boteler and Freville families.

These families had to decide how to implement the agreements which provided for the division of Henley between them after Lord Bergavenny’s death, and the Freville co-heirs also had to decide which of them should have the Freville half. There seems to have been a wish to retain the tenorial link between Henley and Beaudesert. In 1385–6

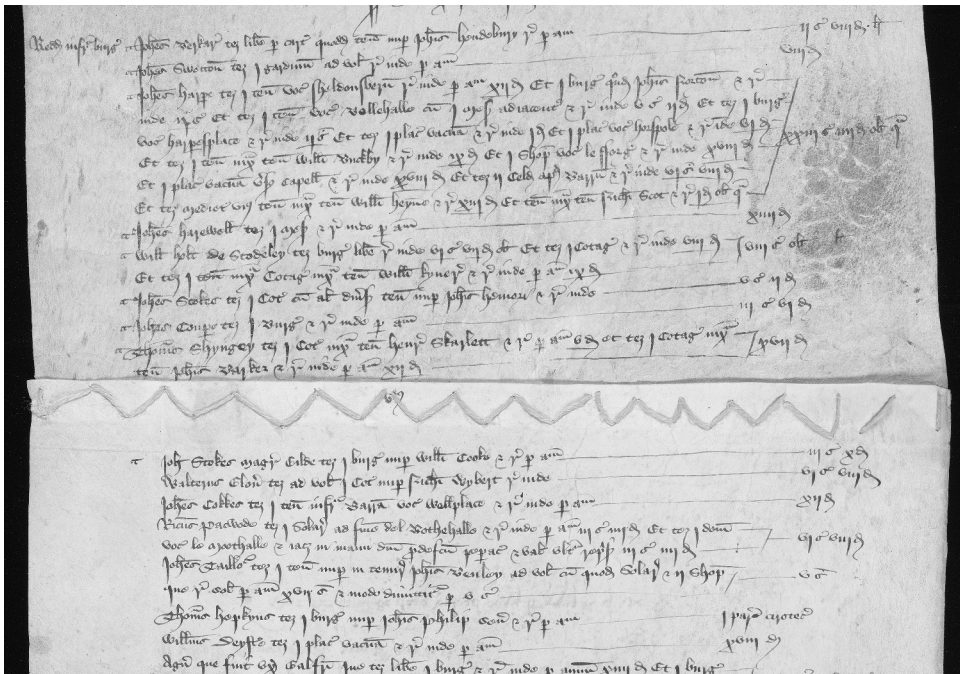


Plate 1. The opening lines of the rental of the borough of Henley-in-Arden of 1419–20. The image is taken from Mi M 214 in the family and estate papers of the Willoughby family, Lords Middleton, and is reproduced by kind permission of the University of Nottingham Manuscripts and Special Collections.

¹⁹Kirby, ‘Inquisitions Post Mortem, Henry IV, Entries 800–860’, pp. 301–2 (no. 846).

²⁰For views on the accuracy of inquisitions post mortem in the fifteenth century: M. Holder ‘“Notoriously unreliable”: the valuations and extents’, in *The Fifteenth-Century Inquisitions Post Mortem: A Companion* ed. by M. Hicks (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2012), pp. 117–44. For political influence on the inquisitions: Carpenter, *Locality and Polity*, pp. 355–6.

²¹*Ibid.*, pp. 365–6.

Baldwin Freville senior and Thomas Boteler agreed that after the death of William Beauchamp Baldwin would have Henley and Beaudesert (with associated lands in nearby Haselholt and Whitley), and would give Thomas half the value.²² At the end of the 1419–20 rental of Beaudesert and Henley, and of the lands associated with them, a total value is given accompanied by the statement that half the value goes to Boteler and the rest remains with Freville. In 1423 an agreement recorded that the Freville half of Henley would go to Robert Aston; there is no reference to Beaudesert.²³ As the last Baldwin Freville had no children, the Boteler family had inherited the whole of Beaudesert in accordance with the agreement of 1394, and it appears that by 1423 it had also obtained possession of one half of Henley. Sir Ralph Boteler had acquired the rest of Henley by 1437, when he was paying rent of assize to the earl of Stafford for Henley. This acquisition may pre-date 1437, which is the first year for which accounts survive; no equivalent payment from Robert Aston was recorded.²⁴ On his death in 1465 Robert Aston held 960 acres of demesne land, much of it apparently in Offord, from the duke of Buckingham as of the duke's Stafford manor of Wootton Wawen. He also held 640 acres of demesne land and obtained rents from a long list of tenants of various landholdings, including the manor of Whitley (rendering a pair of gloves), and the manor of Morton Bagot. All these messuages, lands, woods, pasture and rents were held from Ralph lord of Sudeley as of Ralph's castle of Beaudesert. In this inquisition into Robert's lands there is no mention of Henley, other than as the place where the inquisition was held.²⁵ He had acquired at least some of the land listed as 'foreign rents' in 1419–20. At his death in 1473 Sir Ralph was holding the township of Henley as a parcel of the manor of Beaudesert, thereby maintaining the old link between the two places.²⁶

The Properties

The rental names many sorts of property – *burgagium*, *mesuagium*, *tenementum*, *cotagium*, *croftum*, *shopa*, *celda*, *domus*, *placea*, *parcella terre* and *gardinum*, as well as *solarium* and *stayera*. The numbers of the different types of property can not be exactly ascertained, as some entries refer to holdings in the plural without specifying the exact number (particularly noticeable in the case of cottages); there seem to have been at least thirty-four burgages, thirteen messuages and twenty-eight tenements. Most of the terms used can be confidently translated and the nature of each property reliably understood, but in several cases some discussion is needed.

²²UoN, Middleton MSS, Mi D 4723. This is catalogued as dating from 1377–8, the first year of Richard II. The dating clause in this document, which is written in French, clearly refers to *l'an du reigne le Roy Richard Secund puye le Conqueste nerfisme*; the last word resembles the modern French *neuvième* – 'ninth'.

²³SBTRO, DR 10/1316.

²⁴Staffordshire Record Office, D 641//1/2/269, under Wootton Wawen.

²⁵The National Archives (TNA), C 140/13/24.

²⁶TNA, C 140/47/58. The accounts of the manors of Henley and Beaudesert in VCH, *Warwickshire*, III, pp. 45–9, 206–11, do not appear to have had access to all the sources cited in this present article.

Burgages, Messuages and Tenements

The rental lists at least thirty-four undivided burgages; but there were probably more than this, given the ambiguity of six entries which may each have referred to more than two.²⁷ The highest rent paid for what was certainly only a single burgage is 3s 10d; but if an ambiguous entry (William Holt's) also refers to no more than one, as is likely, the highest was 6s 7½d.²⁸ The lowest rent for a burgage was 2d; and one other was held for the annual payment of a pair of gloves. Composite rents given in the nine entries in which a *cotagium* is included range from 8s 8d to 6d (with the entry for the latter being only one of three in which the text – *i burgagium cum cotagio* – can be read as meaning that the cottage may have stood on the burgage itself). Only two burgages paid 12d, the widely charged rent for burgages in small planted boroughs.²⁹ In the absence of any other recurrent sum which might represent a survival of the original annual rent paid to the owner it is therefore impossible to deduce from the rental what that rent would have been.³⁰ However, two earlier sources are more helpful. In 1320 two burgages at Henley were held by Richard de Stanford of Peter de Montfort by service of 12d yearly and suit of court;³¹ and a deed of the period 1216–30 records a rent of 6d for what appears to be a half-burgage.³² It might also be relevant that, according to their accounts of 1447–8, members of the Catesby family were paying 12d to the lord of Henley for each of three properties and 4d for each of two others. This may point to a lingering memory that burgage rents had once been 12d there, and that the Catesbys were exploiting this to drive a hard bargain in difficult economic times.³³

The rental records thirteen messuages, with their rents (where given separately) varying from 5s to 3d. One of the entries records that William Aldershaw held a messuage and a burgage, and another states that John Harpere had a tenement and an adjoining messuage. They make explicit what the rental otherwise merely implies – that each of these three sorts of property was distinct. There need be no doubt that burgages were original, undivided plots of land, tenure of which conferred burgess status on its holder; but the rental offers no clue as to how we should understand the term messuage in this context.

²⁷Where an entry records *diversa burgagia et cotagia* it is safe to presume that at least two burgages are meant, since otherwise it would say (as some entries do) *i burgagium et diversa cotagia*. Two have been allowed for in our sums in each instance of such an entry, therefore; but in some of them there may have been more than two. Where the entry refers only to *diversa burgagia* (as one does), three have been allowed for.

²⁸Both versions of the survey fail to specify how many burgages William Holt held, and so we have taken *ten' burg'* to represent *tenet burgagium* ('holds a burgage').

²⁹J. Laughton and C. Dyer, 'Small towns in the east and west midlands in the later middle ages: a comparison', *Midland History*, 24 (1999), 24–52, at 26. Local variants were the 8d paid by Birmingham's burgesses and the 16d by Shipston-on-Stour's: R. Holt, *The Early History of the Town of Birmingham 1166 to 1600*, Dugdale Soc. Occas. Papers, XXX (Oxford: 1985), p. 7; G. Demidowicz, *Medieval Birmingham: the Borough Rentals of 1296 and 1344–5*, Dugdale Soc. Occas. Papers, XLVIII (Oxford: 2008), p. 12; S. Bassett and R. Holt, 'Medieval Birmingham', *Birmingham: The Workshop of the World*, ed. by C. Chinn and M. Dick (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), pp. 73–99, at p. 88; C. Dyer, 'Small-town conflict in the later Middle Ages: events at Shipston-on-Stour', *Urban History*, 19 (1992), 183–210, at 189.

³⁰There are eleven properties for which 12d rent was paid in 1419–20, and only two of them were referred to as burgages. (The others are two messuages, four tenements, two cottages and a croft.)

³¹*Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem: Volume 6, Edward II* (London: HMSO, 1910), p. 149 (no. 250).

³²King's College, Cambridge, GBR/0272/WOW/398. For the date 1216–30: S. Wager, 'A plot partitioned: a glimpse of Henley-in-Arden in the early thirteenth century', *Warwickshire History*, forthcoming.

³³TNA SC 6/1042/2. For the period's economic hardships: Laughton and Dyer, 'Small towns', 25.

At least twenty-eight tenements are recorded, and there could be yet another five if ones which are mentioned in abuttals are not otherwise recorded.³⁴ (However, these may be regarded as incidental references: the named occupants may have been sub-tenants, whose tenements were formally recorded in the rental under the name of their landlord.) The relevant entries throw no direct light on the question of what the significant difference was between a tenement and a burgage; but the entry for Nicholas Marculfe's burgage, which shows that these two sorts of property could adjoin, appears to indicate that a tenement was a portion of a burgage.³⁵

Cotagia

'Cottages' too are recorded in nine of the entries, in most instances with no separate rent being recorded for them. Two entries might throw light on this issue. Nicholas Scott's heirs are said to hold *i burgagium cum quodam cotagio vocato Wycheplace* ('a burgage with a *cotagium* called *Wycheplace*'). This could be understood (because of *cum*, 'with') as meaning that the *cotagium* formed part of the burgage, even though the name *Wycheplace* seems to have applied only to the *cotagium*;³⁶ but it is equally possible that the latter adjoined Scott's burgage (with the scribe having omitted *adiacente*, 'adjacent'). Another entry reports that John at the lee *tenet i cotagium cum quodam mesuagio* ('holds a *cotagium* with a messuage'). Here too the *cotagium* could have formed part of the messuage; but it is again possible that the two properties adjoined one another. In the context of the rental as a whole it might make better sense to assume that the properties referred to in each of these entries were distinct rather than integrated in some way or other.

In this context a *cotagium* was probably a small humble dwelling, suitable for sub-letting to landless people who worked for traders and manufacturers in the borough, or even provided to them freely by their employer as part of their wages. Some may have included a small area of adjacent land, thus allowing the occupants to have a back yard and possibly a small garden. An argument against this explanation is the very high rent charged for one of these cottages (6s 8d); but in the eighteen other instances of a rent being stated for a cottage alone, it ranges between 1d and 2s.³⁷

³⁴William Buc[k]by's tenement, which adjoined one of John Harpere's, is not separately recorded – unless it was his 'parcel of land of the blessed Mary' (*parcellam terre beate Marie*), for which he paid 9d rent. Another of John Harpere's tenements adjoined William Heyne's, for which there is similarly no entry; but the latter may previously have held one of the many tenements listed in the survey for which no former tenant is given. So too may William Kyner, Henry Skarlett and Richard Dorriche, named as holding a tenement which adjoined that of, respectively, William Holt of Studley, Thomas Shyngey and John Barker. However, we can not rule out the possibility that William Kyner's tenement was the same property as the messuage, recorded elsewhere in the survey, which William Kyn' held; nor that Henry Skarlett had formerly held the tenement on which Magot Scarlett's cottage was standing in 1419–20. By contrast the four other tenements named in abuttals can be confidently identified elsewhere in the survey. Nicholas Scott, whose tenement is referred to in the entry for Nicholas Marculfe's burgage, occurs elsewhere in the survey as the former holder of John Chamberlyn's tenement; John Barker, who held a tenement adjoining another of Thomas Shyngey's, must be the John Berker whose tenement is the first property recorded in the survey – in the other manuscript the spelling of his name in that first entry is Barker; John Harpere held three-and-a-half tenements; and, finally, William Scott is named as the former holder of John Chamberleyn's tenement.

³⁵Four tenements had their names recorded, while only one burgage does (and none of the messuages). A second burgage may also have been named – the 'one burgage with a certain cottage named *Wycheplace*' (*i burgagium cum quodam cotagio vocato Wycheplace*), which was held by Nicholas Scott's heirs; but if so, one would have expected *vocatum* (agreeing with *burgagium*), not *vocato* (agreeing with *cotagio*).

³⁶On this also see note 41.

³⁷Both the median and the average of these eighteen rents is 12d.

Crofts

The rental records three crofts, two of which yielded a substantial rent (2s and 1s 6d respectively). One had a name, *harecroft*. A croft can be defined as a small enclosed area of arable or pasture attached to a house. Henley's crofts may have been situated at the rear of a burgage, messuage or tenement, beyond any back yard, garden or orchard, especially as one of them adjoined one of the area's two parks. This points to its having lain beyond the rear end of a property which fronted onto High Street, as at least one of the other two may also have done.³⁸

Plots and Parcels of Land

There are also eight entries for a plot/plot of land (*placea/placea terre*), four of which are said to be vacant. Since three of the latter yielded a more substantial rent than any of those which are not so described, it is possible that all eight were vacant at the time of the rental. If so, *placea/placea terre* is the term used for a formally laid out plot on which no house stood at that time.³⁹

The rental also includes other arguably similar areas. John Webbe held an unspecified number of parcels of land (*diversas parcelas terre*); and William Buc[k]by had another one, described as a parcel of the blessed Mary's land (*parcellam terre beate Marie*).⁴⁰ Two other pieces of land are also recorded; but one, and possibly both, almost certainly lay elsewhere in the manor, being mentioned in the part of the rental which covers the borough only by virtue of being coupled with land within it.⁴¹

The episcopal survey of Stratford of 1251–2 reports that about sixty such plots of ground (*placeae terrae*) were held by the burgesses, and *placea* were also recorded in rentals for Birmingham in 1296 and 1344–45. They were presumably enclosures of land which had not been needed for burgages; if so, the fact that at Stratford only three people held land both in the borough and in the rest of the manor should mean that these *placeae* were within the borough's boundary.⁴² Analysis of Stratford's and Birmingham's plans identified areas which may not have been developed in the medieval period, allowing plenty of room for them.⁴³ At Henley the plots and parcels of land listed in the rental may have abutted the western burgages' back boundary,

³⁸The two parks lay immediately beyond the borough's back boundaries (with the eastern one separated from it by the Alne). John Chamberleyn is said to have held a tenement with a croft (*i tenementum ... cum i crofto*), which suggests that they too were conjoined.

³⁹This suggestion need not be fatally undermined by the reference to *i placea nove terre de novae appruationis* ('one plot of new land of new enclosure'), since it is clear from this and other Henley sources that the borough's plan was not fixed, having been extended along High Street to the south of its formal limits and also perhaps in one or more other directions. Moreover, the survey of 1419–20 arguably repeats text from earlier ones, so that it is possible that there was nothing new about the land concerned at the time of this particular borrowing. For a similar interpretation of *placea terre*: C. Dyer, 'Medieval Stratford: a successful small town', in *The History of an English Borough: Stratford-upon-Avon, 1196–1996*, ed. by R. Bearman (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997), pp. 43–61, at p. 44.

⁴⁰See below, note 98.

⁴¹The dolemeadow held by John Webbe (*Johannes Webbe tenet le dolemedowe et i placeam vacuam*) presumably lay beyond the borough, and Thomas Poorey's acre of land may also have done (*Thomas Poorey tenet i tenementum cum i acra terre*).

⁴²Dyer, 'Medieval Stratford', p. 43.

⁴³T. R. Slater, 'The analysis of burgage patterns in medieval towns', *Area*, 13 (1981), 211–16, at 214; T. R. Slater, 'Domesday village to medieval town: the topography of medieval Stratford-upon-Avon', in *History of an English Borough*, pp. 30–42, at pp. 38–9, where he is less sure than before that the land concerned was free of burgages from the outset, but still leaves the possibility open (and suggests no other location for the c. 60 *placeae* of 1251–2, which must have been within the borough's boundary). For Birmingham: Demidowicz, *Medieval Birmingham*, pp. 13–14.

where there was ample land available (which – as was certainly the case at Stratford – may have been included within the borough).

Two gardens were also held as separate properties.

Shops/Workshops and Booths

The fact that two of the premises referred to as *shopa* were forges suggests that they may all have been workshops. It is likely that there were other workshops in the borough but that these seven were leased individually, while the rest may have stood, unrecorded, on burgages and other such properties. It is unclear why their rents should have differed so considerably, but size and location were presumably salient factors. Similarly, two booths were leased separately but need not have been the borough's only ones.⁴⁴

Staircases

There are three references to a *stayera/steyera*. Each of these was probably a wooden staircase which projected from a property's upper floor to the street below, used for the ease of loading and unloading goods and thereby causing an obstruction for which rent was charged.⁴⁵

Rental Income

The total income from rents in the borough is given as £10 3s 6d and a pair of gloves. This compares with £10 5s ½d in 1412 (according to the further inquisition after Lord Bergavenny's death),⁴⁶ and £7 18s 11d in 1296 (according to the inquisition post mortem for John de Montfort).⁴⁷ The 1412 inquisition also reported that tolls of the weekly market amounted to 20s and the twice-yearly view of frankpledge to 13s 4d, both suspiciously rounded figures. The low level of tolls, even if it was an estimate, suggests that most people trading in Henley were residents exempt from tolls. The annual income to the lord of Henley from the borough is comparable with the annual income received by the bishops of Worcester as lords of Stratford-upon-Avon in the fifteenth century, which varied between £10 and £12, a smaller sum than the income received by the Guild of the Holy Cross in Stratford for its properties within the town which, as sub-tenancies, would have been let at commercial rents.⁴⁸ It was not a large source of income. The information preceding the Henley rental records that pasture in the two parks of Beaudesert brought in £4 13s 4d from each, the total of £9 6s 8d being not much less than the income from rents in the borough.

⁴⁴The dimensions are known of the booths and shops in the borough of Stratford, which were 'packed into restricted spaces, notably in the Middle Row in Bridge Street'. Many of them were very small, and each was rented as a separate holding: Dyer, 'Medieval Stratford', p. 46. Also see below, notes 52 and 96.

⁴⁵Christopher Dyer, pers. comm.

⁴⁶Kirby, 'Inquisitions Post Mortem, Henry IV, Entries 800–860', pp. 301–2 (no. 846).

⁴⁷TNA, C 133/76/4.

⁴⁸Dyer, 'Medieval Stratford', pp. 49, 51–2. For exemptions from tolls: C. Dyer, 'Small towns 1270–1540', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain. Volume 1, 600–1540*, ed. by M. Palliser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 505–38. at p. 524.

Conditions of Tenure

None of the properties held 'at will' was a burgage.⁴⁹ They are, respectively, a garden, a cottage, a tenement, and a messuage. The apparent implication is that the tenant owed services as well as rent, even though none is ever specified. Given that the present rental may well be the latest in a lengthy succession of them, with much of its content having been copied *verbatim* from its predecessor (as may be true of the latter's own predecessors), phrases such as *ad voluntatem* may figure inconsistently in it, thus making generalizing an unsafe exercise. In other words, the absence of this phrase from any other property's entry can not be safely taken to mean that its tenure was unconditional.

A similar problem occurs with statements that a property was held freely (*libere*). Six entries use this word, with one of them reporting that the property was held freely by charter (*per cartam*). Five of these six are followed by *li'* in the right-hand margin, which is assumed to be an abbreviation for *libere* (normally written as *lib'e* in the entries themselves), and which was arguably added so as to ensure speedy identification. Only one of the entries which contain *libere* lacks this marginal note, presumably because of a scribal oversight; and there is an entry which has the marginal note, even though it does not contain *libere*. Statements that a property was held freely are also attached to some of the 'foreign' rents listed immediately after the rental of the borough. Four of these landholdings outside the borough are called manors, two of which were held by military service. Like the entries in the Henley rental the foreign rents may have been copied from an earlier document.

Four of the seven properties which are said to have been held freely were tenements, and the other three were burgages. This raises a significant issue concerning the other thirty-four or more burgages recorded in the rental. Normally, burgage tenure in England involved no more than the payment of a cash rent and attendance at court, but the implication here is that the great majority of Henley's burgages – those (with rents ranging from 2d to 3s 10d) which were not said to be held freely – were burdened with obligations of an unreported kind. One possibility is that those who held one freely had the right to bequeath or let it, whereas most burgages had to be surrendered to the lord on the burgess's death or if the burgess did not wish to continue with the tenancy. However, the holding of the heirs of Nicholas Scotte indicates hereditary tenure in that burgage at least. There is, then, no indication that Henley had a parallel in Worcester Cathedral Priory's borough at Shipston-on-Stour (Warwicks.), where all tenants were treated as customary ones who owed services (such as entry fines, heriots and marriage fines) in addition to a cash rent, instead of as burgesses of the normal sort. Transfers of burgages had to be made by surrender in the priory's manorial court at Blackwell.⁵⁰ However, a combination of free and apparently unfree holdings in Henley is unusual. Possible reasons why just a few of Henley's burgages may have been held, as it seems, by free tenure are discussed later in this article.

⁴⁹Presumably, 'at the lord's will' (*ad voluntatem domini*).

⁵⁰Dyer, 'Small-town conflict', 195.

Useful Information about the Borough's Landscape

At first sight, most of the topographical information given in the rental may seem of little historical value. Its contents would be considerably enhanced if it was possible to detect a systematic order in its compilation. Elsewhere this can sometimes be done, with successive entries arguably working property-by-property along each street frontage;⁵¹ but it appears that that is not the case here. On a few occasions the same tenant occurs in several widely separated entries (as, for instance, does John Stokes, Master of the Gild), which might suggest that the entries' ordering was dictated by burghal topography; but in considerably more cases all of an individual tenant's properties are grouped in a single entry (for example, in the third one, John Harper's), or in one or more successive ones. Accordingly, it is impossible to use the rental as a guide to the borough's specific layout, which means that we do not know the locations of the properties with the highest and lowest rents, for instance, or those of the few remaining undivided burgages.

However, the rental does provide some important details. For instance, the names of the three 'halls' suggest that the *Bollehalle*, *le Bothehalle* and *le Moothalle* may have been public buildings. The incidental reference to the *Bothehalle* can presumably be linked to a timber-framed market house, reportedly demolished in 1793, which stood near to St John's church. A partial drawing shows it to have been open-sided on the ground floor, with an upper floor supported by timber posts.⁵² It would have accommodated booths, i.e. covered market stalls, with the covering here being provided by the upper floor. The incidental reference suggests that in the early fifteenth century it remained in use for its original purpose, presumably managed by the lord of Henley, rather than being leased to a tenant for other purposes. The Moot-hall, described as a house (*domus*), was in the lord's hands because of the need for repairs; it was presumably where the borough court met.⁵³ The *bollehalle* may have taken its name from 'boll', a generic term for a measure of capacity or weight of grain. If so, it was presumably the building in which grain brought for sale in the market was weighed and checked. It would be an uncommon record of such a building, but, given the need to protect grain from damp on a wet market day and to ensure that correct weights and measures were used, this interpretation of its function is a practical one.⁵⁴ The rental's incidental reference to a corn market (*le corne chepyng*) shows Henley's importance as a market for local agricultural produce; it was obviously a distinct area of Henley, as a message is described as being in it.

⁵¹For example, Burton-on-Trent (Staffs.): D. G. Stuart, 'A rental of the borough of Burton, 1319', *Collections for a History of Staffordshire*, Ser. 4, 16 (1994), pp. 1–51. at pp. 7–9.

⁵²W. Cooper, *Henley-in-Arden. An Ancient Market Town and its Surroundings* (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers Limited, 1946), p. 75. Booth halls were also built at Warwick in 1369 and Burton Dassett (Warwicks.) in the fifteenth century: VCH, W. B. Stephens, ed., *Warwickshire*, VIII (London, 1969), p. 481; Laughton and Dyer, 'Small towns', 32.

⁵³The role of Richard Pacwde/Pacwod as its tenant in 1419–20 is unclear. However, there are examples in other towns, such as Stratford, of tenants holding public buildings (Christopher Dyer, pers. comm.). It is most unlikely that the building had ceased being used by the borough court. Richard Holt comments (pers. comm.) that, as a building used only every three weeks, if so often, the Moot-hall could have been useful in other ways, and suggests that Richard may have been a borough official, who was renting it on behalf of the borough community, 'which is otherwise pretty invisible here and has only a shadowy identity in law'.

⁵⁴It may have lost its original function by the time of the survey, when it was described as a tenement held by John Harper. Christopher Dyer (pers. comm.) is not aware of any record of such a building in other small towns.

The rental has twelve named properties. Two are (work)shops called the Forge, which indicates that they were, or had been, smithies kept deliberately separate from dwellings.⁵⁵ Four have the suffix ‘place’ (*harperesplace*, *Wellplace*, *Wycheplace*, *Grayesplace*). John Harpere held the burgage called *harperesplace*, and it is likely that *Wycheplace* and *Grayesplace* also bore the surname of a present or former occupant; *Wellplace* too may also have done so, or else have been adjacent to an important well. John Harpere also held a tenement called *Sheldonsberne/barne*, a name suggesting that its original function was the storage of grain.

Of particular interest are six references to properties located ‘at the Barre’ (*apud Barram*, *apud le Barre*), and three references to ones ‘within the Barre’ (*infra Barram/barram*, *infra le Barre*). There is evidence in other late medieval sources of two toll barriers in Henley – one at the southern end of High Street and the other on Beaudesert Lane,⁵⁶ and there was a third one at the northern end of High Street in the eighteenth century which was arguably on the same site as a late medieval predecessor.⁵⁷ Yet *le Barre* has the appearance of a specific place-name, as opposed to a mere description; if so, it must relate to the vicinity of only one of the toll barriers – presumably one which had taken on a rather greater importance than the others. Although there is no decisive evidence, the likeliest location for it is the southern one, where there may have been a block of approximately equal-sized properties on High Street’s eastern side, immediately outside the borough’s boundary and set back a little to the rear of the projected line of the road’s eastern frontage within it. These are still detectable on the ground today.⁵⁸ Given that there is no comparable external development visible in the borough’s plan at the other entrances, this block of properties may have encouraged adoption of ‘at *le Barre*’ as a name for the southern toll barrier’s immediate vicinity. If so, properties which are described as being either at or within the Barre must have lain in that area – arguably, either just outside it (*apud*), as suggested above, or just inside (*infra*).

It may be significant that all three of the staircases (*stayera/steyera*) are said to be ‘at the Barre’. If this location’s proposed identification is correct, it suggests that they were a feature of the properties laid out on High Street’s eastern frontage, just outside the borough’s southern toll barrier, and might well have been seen as particularly obstructive at the entrance to the town.

The People

The approximate number of dwellings in the rental can be used to make a very rough estimate of the population of Henley in 1419–20. This is particularly useful because the returns of poll tax payers in Warwickshire in 1377, 1379 and 1381 are lost or damaged,

⁵⁵One of them was vacant in 1419–20, which might indicate that there was a reduction in this trade then.

⁵⁶*A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds in the Public Record Office*, V (London: HMSO, 1906), p. 472, A. 13,228; SBTRO, ER1/62; Cooper, *Henley-in-Arden*, pp. 17, 169. The southern one doubtless stood at the point, immediately south of the southernmost burgages, where the main road through Henley reverts from a width of c. 60 ft (c. 18.3 m) to its customary one of c. 120 ft (c. 36.6 m). Beaudesert Lane runs westwards towards High Street, joining it immediately to the south of St John’s church. In and after the twelfth century it gave direct access from the west to the Montforts’ castle in the manor of Beaudesert.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 17. The tollgate house and gate are shown on the tithe map (1843), located immediately north of the northernmost burgage on either side of the road.

⁵⁸They are presently occupied by 261–283 High Street.

and no records of Henley tax payers have survived.⁵⁹ Had they survived, we would have had information about many of Henley's residents who were not mentioned in the rental because they were not tenants of the lord but were renting properties from some of those tenants (or given free accommodation in part-payment of wages). We can assume that a significant proportion of these unknown people were living in the cottages, with their families, and were working for Henley's craftsmen and traders or even were labouring on local agricultural holdings.

Estimates of population of other small towns have been made on the basis of the number of households, or dwellings, and the assumption that an average number of people in each household was four or five.⁶⁰ The number of dwellings in Henley in 1419–20 was at least 112; the number of additional properties covered by the various references to 'divers' holdings might have raised this number to over 130, which would suggest that the population was over 500 and possibly over 600. Henley was certainly in the small towns league. On the basis of the number of its residents assessed for tax purposes in 1327, and the tax they were due to pay, it was markedly smaller than most other small towns in the west midlands.⁶¹ However, it was probably not the smallest. The population of Shipston-on-Stour has been estimated at between 300 and 400, and to judge from the number of taxpayers in 1327 Atherstone, Rugby, Bretford and Brinklow seem to have been smaller.⁶²

The rental gives scant information about the occupations and status of the tenants. It includes two smiths and John Ive, a parker; he was probably responsible for one or both of the (Great and Little) parks of Beaudesert. John Chamberleyn is presumably the same man described as constable of the castle and manor of Beaudesert in October 1412, when an inquisition recorded that he had taken all the profits of the castle and manor since the death of Lord Bergavenny in May 1411.⁶³ There is no mention of Henley in that inquisition. One can speculate that John Chamberleyn may have served Lord Bergavenny as bailiff of Henley, but William Mountford presumably put his own man into Henley when he took what turned out to be temporary possession of it after Lord Bergavenny's death; we do not know what arrangements were later made by the Freville family.

Despite the lack of information on people's occupations, the surnames of some of the tenants may reveal the occupations of their ancestors over a century earlier. Although the latter may have lived elsewhere, having migrated to Henley in the intervening period, there is some evidence of longevity in surnames and families resident in Henley. The lay subsidy rolls of 1327 and 1332 listed twenty-four and twenty-five taxpayers respectively,⁶⁴ eleven of their surnames – Smith, Hemory, Thro[c]marton, Arleschawe, Ive, Deyster, Body, Ba[r]kar, Marculf, Taylor and

⁵⁹C. C. Fenwick, ed., *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381: Part 2, Lincolnshire – Westmorland*, Records of Social and Economic History, New Series 29 (Oxford: British Academy, 2001), pp. 631–89.

⁶⁰For the multiplier of four: R. Holt, 'Gloucester in the century after the Black Death', in *The Medieval Town: A Reader in English Urban History, 1200–1540*, ed. by R. Holt and G. Rosser (Harlow: Longman, 1990), pp. 141–59, at p. 157; for one of four-and-a-half: Dyer, 'Medieval Stratford', p. 44; and for one of five: Demidowicz, *Medieval Birmingham*, p. 12.

⁶¹Dyer, 'Medieval Stratford', p. 45.

⁶²Dyer, 'Small-town conflict', 193; C. Dyer, 'Was Bidford-on-Avon a Town in the Middle Ages?', *Warwickshire History*, 15.3 (2012), 93–110. at 105.

⁶³Kirby, 'Inquisitions Post Mortem, Henry IV, Entries 800–860', p. 303 (no. 847).

⁶⁴W. Carter, ed., 'Lay subsidy roll, Warwickshire, 1327', *Trans. Midland Record Soc.*, 6 (1902), 36; W. Carter, ed., *The Lay Subsidy Rolls for Warwickshire of 6 Edward III*, Dugdale Soc. VI (London, 1926), p. 2. Henley's entry in the 1332 roll contains a sizeable gap into which, it seems, other names should have been written (*ibid.*, p. 2, note 3), so that the total number of its taxpayers is likely to have been at least thirty.

Hereford – can be found as tenants in the rental of 1419–20. With regard to the intervening epidemics of plague and the drastic reduction in England’s population which followed, this is a notably high proportion and suggests that the ancestors of people named in the rental as Taillor, Barbor, Smith, Barker (presumably someone who stripped bark for tanning), Glover, Cooper, Carpenter, Plum[b]er, Tyler, Lawnder, W[h]eler, Webbe, Cooke, Sowegelder and Goldsmyth were living in Henley in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries when occupational surnames were formed.⁶⁵ The goldsmith, a manufacturer of luxury items, seems an unusual craftsman to find in a small borough which provided only the basic services indicated by the other surnames, especially as the survey of nearby Stratford-upon-Avon in 1251–2 had no tenant described as a goldsmith.⁶⁶ However, Thomas *aurifabro* witnessed a deed involving property in Henley which appears to be not later than 1230 and may be somewhat earlier.⁶⁷ In 1230 he was involved in a legal claim over property which had belonged to his father Geoffrey, also a goldsmith, in Coventry;⁶⁸ it looks as if father and son had developed a business in this part of Warwickshire.

Only a few of the surnames in the rental suggest the origins of their ancestors. Packwood and Dorridge were local places; Northampton, Buckby (Northants.) and Hanslope (Bucks.) – a manor of the earls of Warwick – were much further afield; and minor place-names appear in atte Well, atte lee, brugge, Aldershaw and presumably Katerineasshe.

The longevity of surnames can be traced in some of Henley’s higher-status residents, including two of those who served on the jury for the inquisition post mortem of Baldwin Freville junior in 1418 and the additional inquiry about his father later that year. On 1 June 1418 the twelve jurors were John Ive (presumably the parker in the rental), Thomas Pulton, Simon Felton, Thomas Cokkes, William Hichecok, Richard Cokkes, Thomas Shyngey, John Cokkes, John Yveton, Thomas Herford, and John Stokes. On 17 November they all met again.⁶⁹ Ten of them appear in the 1419–20 rental, and one of them, William Hichecok, in the list of ‘foreign’ rents which follows it; only John Yveton is not found in the rental.⁷⁰ Serving on a local jury suggests that these people were local residents rather than absentee landlords. Information from some deeds relating to nearby places confirms that at least some of them, such as John Ive,⁷¹ were resident in Henley. The Ive family was of high enough status for Geoffrey and John to be two of the feoffees of land in Lapworth in 1409.⁷² The Deyster and Wheler families, mentioned in the rental, were also resident and in business. In 1445 the prior of Wootton Wawen sold the wood from the priory’s nearby Mockley Wood to John

⁶⁵Dyer, *Peasants Making History*, pp. 85–91; C. Dyer, ‘Migration in rural England in the later middle ages’, in *Migrants in Medieval England, c. 500 – c. 1500*, ed. by W. M. Ormrod, J. Story and E. M. Tyler, Proceedings of the British Academy 229 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 238–64.

⁶⁶E. M. Carus-Wilson, ‘The first half-century of the borough of Stratford-upon-Avon’, *Economic History Rev.*, 18 (1965), 46–63, at 55.

⁶⁷King’s College, Cambridge, GBR/0272/WOW/398; for the date: Wager, ‘A plot partitioned’.

⁶⁸*Curia Regis Rolls XIV. Volume 14 to 17, Henry III, 1230–1232* (London: HMSO, 1961), p. 18.

⁶⁹*Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, Volume 21, 6 to 10 Henry V, 38–9* (nos 132–3). *Mapping the Medieval Countryside*, available at <<https://inquisitionspostmortem.ac.uk>> [accessed 24 September 2022], names the jurors, whereas the printed calendar does not.

⁷⁰By 1419 Richard Cokkes had died. His widow, Agnes, held a messuage which had been held by her late husband.

⁷¹TNA, E 40/4266.

⁷²TNA, E 40/4530.

Deyster, William Whiler and John Whyler (*sic*) junior of Henley-in-Arden. Although the duration of the contract is difficult to read owing to a stain in the manuscript, it looks as if it was for two years and therefore still current when King's College, Cambridge finally secured the possessions of the priory in 1447; this would explain why the indenture was passed to the college with other documents including title deeds.⁷³ It raises the possibility that it was the last in a series of such arrangements, which suggests that not only these people, but also others before them, had an established business trading in wood. (Residents of Henley would have needed to buy firewood in substantial quantities.)

The rental's description of William Holt as being *of Stodeley* (Studley, Warwicks.) suggests that he was regarded not only as an outsider (albeit from a place where the Montfort family had property⁷⁴), but possibly also as a non-resident.

John Stokes appears in the rental as Master of the Gild, a religious fraternity in Henley known from other sources. He had status and money enough to join the larger and more prestigious gild in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1429–30.⁷⁵

Concluding Discussion

At first sight the rental of the borough of Henley made in 1419–20 seems to offer little information about Henley's topography, or about its population, which is of more than local interest. It does not indicate in which parts of the town most of the properties were situated; occupations are given for only a very small number of tenants; and there is no information about the number or names of people, probably servants or labourers, who were not holding properties directly from the lord. There is mention of two forges and some workshops, but otherwise no indication of the crafts and trades being pursued. There is no information about sub-letting of properties; we do not know the number of such arrangements, the terms on which they were made, or the amount of rent paid by sub-tenants. The rental has no predecessor, and another one was not made until 1608.⁷⁶ However, some important clues do emerge from its analysis as to what had happened in the town during the fourteenth century; these may help to explain some subsequent developments in the fifteenth century. The diversity of properties, the disparity in rents paid to the lord, and the conditions of tenure all deserve further discussion.

A striking feature is the almost complete abandonment of a permanently fixed burgage rent. The list of rents due plainly shows that in almost all cases the remaining undivided burgages were not being held at the original burgage rent of 12d. The rental's full extent shows this change clearly; incidental information which might have been included in a few surviving deeds would not have conveyed the complete picture.

Comparison with what is known of other towns in the west midlands confirms that a reorganization of the original burgage arrangements on the initiative or with the

⁷³King's College, Cambridge, GBR/0272/WOW/128. For examples of some other fifteenth-century contracts for sales of wood in Warwickshire to people arguably acting as middlemen: S. J. Wager, *Woods, Wolds and Groves: The Woodland of Medieval Warwickshire*, British Archaeol. Reports, British Series 269 (1998), p. 259.

⁷⁴Kirby, 'Inquisitions Post Mortem, Henry IV, Entries 800–860', p. 302 (no. 846).

⁷⁵M. Macdonald, ed., *The Register of the Guild of the Holy Cross, St Mary and St John the Baptist, Stratford-upon-Avon*, Dugdale Soc. XLII (Stratford-upon-Avon, 2007), p. 98.

⁷⁶TNA, LR 2/228, ff. 36–64.

approval of the lord was not unusual. Already in 1251–2 the survey of the bishop's properties in Stratford-upon-Avon showed that sixty-seven of the people listed in it as burgesses held a half-burgage, two of them held two-thirds of a burgage, while five had a one-third portion and one had only a quarter; all had full burgage rights and privileges.⁷⁷ Whereas the term burgage continued in use for official subdivisions of burgages in Stratford in the middle of the thirteenth century, there were changes in terminology elsewhere. In Birmingham, for example, rentals of 1296 and 1344–5 show that the number of burgages and half-burgages declined from 131 in 1296 (ninety-eight full burgages and thirty-three half-burgages) to twenty-three in 1344–5, and that the number of tenements increased from 102 to 197. There were also houses, messuages and cottages as well as other types of property, which suggests that many burgages had undergone division and amalgamation accompanied by a change in terminology and a reallocation of the original 8d burgage rent.⁷⁸ In 1344–5 most of the remaining burgages seem – the manuscript is damaged in parts – to have retained the 8d rent or half that amount.⁷⁹ A statistical analysis of approximately 800 properties of Llanthony Priory as recorded in Gloucester in 1455 showed that the number of burgages paying old landgable rents to the city authorities had declined over the centuries, but that where landgable was still paid it remained fixed at the level recorded in the twelfth century and probably dating from the eleventh century. The ordinary commercial rents charged by the priory to its tenants were higher.⁸⁰ In Coventry, at the top of the urban hierarchy in the west midlands region, the cathedral priory compiled a register of important documents and a description of all its properties in 1411; in the rental of over 530 properties which it held in the city only a very few were called burgages, with tenement being a common description. However, the register's editors refer to the priory's claim to have held some of its properties from the foundation of the city, and they note that many rents in the central area and around the market were 12d or a fraction of that sum, interpreting them as 'reflecting the original quitrents (landgable or hawgable) charged on the burgages when originally laid out'. The priory's income from rents and leases in the city amounted to £206.⁸¹ Some indication of the rents charged by tenants to their sub-tenants in Coventry is given in the records of the Catesby family; in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries rents charged for cottages varied from 3s to 8s a year and up to 30s a year for larger tenements.⁸²

In Henley the rents attached to the remaining burgages show few traces of the original burgage rent. There is no information in the rental about the presumably commercial rents charged by tenants to their sub-tenants. The rents charged by the lord in 1419–20 can not be assumed to reflect contemporary commercial rents, although they might reflect general or particular economic circumstances at the time

⁷⁷Carus-Wilson, 'The first half-century', 58. She speculates that 'Perhaps at Stratford there was some such rule as at Preston in Lancashire, that a tenant could qualify as being of burgess status provided he held a street frontage of at least 12 feet' (*ibid.*, citing M. Bateson, 'The laws of Breteuil', *English Historical Rev.*, 15 (1900), 496–523, at 503).

⁷⁸Demidowicz, *Medieval Birmingham*, pp. 25–6.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 50–65.

⁸⁰C. Casson and M. Casson, 'Location, location, location? Analysing property rents in medieval Gloucester', *Economic History Rev.*, 69.2 (2016), 575–99.

⁸¹P. Coss and J. C. Lancaster Lewis, eds., *Coventry Priory Register, with Coventry in 1411 by Nat Alcock* (Bristol: Dugdale Soc. in assoc. with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, 2013), *passim*, with quotation from p. 7 and the value of the city properties at p. 5. The register is TNA, E 164/21.

⁸²N. W. Alcock, 'The Catesbys in Coventry: a medieval estate and its archives', *Midland History*, 15 (1990), 1–36. at 11.

they were set. It is therefore worth considering whether any aspect of the borough's history might explain the variety of rents due to the lord in 1419–20 and in particular the abandonment of the standard burgage rent for most of the remaining burgages.

The date of the Henley rental may point to a significant difference from the thirteenth-century rentals of Stratford-upon-Avon and Birmingham. Henley's rental followed successive major outbreaks of plague in the mid to late fourteenth century. It is inevitable that these would have caused the death of many of Henley's inhabitants, including both burgesses and their heirs. In the absence of a burgage holder or heir to that person the lord would have taken over the burgage and consequently any sub-tenancies, converting surviving sub-tenants into direct tenants and collecting as rent the sums which they had been paying to the burgesses. The latter had been able to charge their sub-tenants considerably more than a proportion of the original standard rent of 12d a burgage. At the same time surviving townspeople, both burgesses and sub-tenants, would have had the opportunity to compete for vacant properties, either whole burgages or other properties formerly held directly from the lord or properties which had been sub-tenancies. Burgesses may have taken the opportunity to move to a better property, leaving their former holdings for the lord to offer to new tenants at a higher rent than the previous standard one of 12d or a lower rent if there was little demand. The few burgages which still carried a rent of 12d in 1419–20, such as the one held by Thomas Shylmen, may have been those in continuous possession by the same family since before the disruption caused by the plagues. It may be significant that the rental also states that Thomas held his burgage freely.

It would have been in the lord's interest to bargain over new tenancies, balancing a wish to obtain the highest rent possible against an equally strong desire to secure some income rather than have properties left vacant. The level of demand for properties might have varied significantly between different decades in the second half of the fourteenth century, reflecting economic changes after successive outbreaks of plague and leading to different levels of rent for apparently similar types of property. Location within the town could also have been a relevant factor, and the lord might also have made some concessions over repairs to the property.

It is also possible that Henley's lords made some changes to their tenants' property holdings at a much earlier date. After Peter de Montfort's death on the losing side at the Battle of Evesham in 1265 and the fire reported in the subsequent inquisition into his lands,⁸³ his tenants may have hesitated to remain in the town, especially when faced with the immediate loss of trade and the cost of rebuilding their properties. Although population levels were high in the thirteenth century, prospective new tenants from outside the borough might also have been deterred by the disruption to trade and the cost of rebuilding. It might have been easier, therefore, for Peter de Montfort's successor to help existing tenants with the cost of rebuilding as a capital expense rather than offer permanent reductions in rent. The rental income at John de Montfort's death in 1296 was £7 18s 11d, a lower figure than in the early fifteenth century.

⁸³It was arguably a deliberate revenge for his participation in the rebellion against the king and thus likely to have caused extensive damage.

In 1419–20 freehold status was attached to four properties which were described as tenements, not as burgages. For example, John Ive the parker held, in addition to a vacant plot for which he paid 14d, half a tenement freely for 13d. The circumstances under which some tenements were held freely, and therefore presumably by burgage tenure directly from the lord, are not clear. As was explained in the analysis of different types of property, it is likely that a tenement was part of a burgage. The division of a burgage might have been sanctioned, if not initiated, by the lord on the understanding that both parts were held directly from him. This is what happened in Stratford-upon-Avon by the middle of the thirteenth century, although there the divided parts were called half- or part-burgages. There are two possible reasons why in 1419–20 most of Henley's tenements did not carry freehold status. They may previously have been sub-tenancies which had been taken over by the lord on the assumption that they did not carry freehold status. Alternatively, they may have been the result of a division of burgages which the lord had sanctioned on the understanding that rent for each part was paid directly to him but of which the original freehold status subsequently lapsed after the tenements fell vacant at some point during the plagues. They had then been let out to new tenants at different rents and without explicit recognition of freehold status. John Barker, the first tenant listed in the rental, when taking on the tenement recently held by John Hendebury, managed to obtain a charter giving or confirming freehold status. Others do not seem to have taken that line. If they were not burdened with any extra services or exactions, and if in practice they enjoyed the kind of free tenure usually associated with a borough, they may have reasoned that there was no need to clarify their status. Tenements held by the abbot of Bordesley were not described as freely held in the text but were marked with the marginal abbreviation of *libere*; as an institution, Bordesley Abbey would have had continuity of tenure throughout the plagues.⁸⁴

Although standard burgage rents had all but disappeared by 1419–20, the view of Henley as a borough remained. The word burgage is used in the rental to describe some of the properties, and the marginal heading to the list of tenants refers to rents within the borough. When a dispute arose between the members of Henley's gild and the prior of Wootton Wawen (over burial rights claimed by the church of Wootton), the papal bull issued by Martin V in 1428 referred to a petition from Sir Ralph Boteler and the burgesses of Henley.⁸⁵ Henley's leading men knew how to make the most of the influence of their landlord. A view of his career is instructive. For much of the first decade of his lordship of Henley he was absent on military service in France. He became a councillor to the infant Henry VI in 1423, and served as the king's chamber knight in 1430, chief butler in 1435, chamberlain of the king's household in 1441–7, treasurer of England in 1443–6, and steward of the royal household in 1447–57. Connections to Warwickshire, in the form of his tenure of Henley and Beaudesert, might explain why he was

⁸⁴As previously noted, no type of property apart from burgages and tenements was described as being freely held.

⁸⁵King's College, Cambridge, GBR/0272/WOW/634.

appointed constable and steward of Kenilworth castle in 1433, an appointment later confirmed for life.⁸⁶ In 1439–40 he, his wife, his son and his son-in-law were admitted to the gild in Stratford-upon-Avon.⁸⁷ As a largely absentee landlord – his main estate was at Sudeley (Gloucs.) – it seems likely that when he used his influence on his tenants' behalf he was responding to pleas from them, possibly conveyed through his agent in Henley, rather than taking the lead himself. Among their concerns might well have been the lack of certainty over their tenurial status.

This may lie behind one of the provisions of a royal charter granted to Sir Ralph Boteler. On 16 May 1449 the king issued a confirmation of liberties to him, describing him as lord of Sudeley, knight, tenant and possessor of the town and manor of Henley-in-Arden. The matters covered included his right to view of frankpledge of all tenants and residents in the town and manor of Henley, the weekly Monday market, returns of all writs and commands of the king and government officials, and also control over bills and commands of the steward and marshal and clerk of the market of the king's household within the town and manor, the tenants and residents of which had been 'vexed by the king's ministers'. The grant also specified that all tenants be quit of toll, stallage, pontage, pannage, poundage, murage, quayage and chiminage.⁸⁸ From the offices which he had held Sir Ralph Boteler was in a position to know exactly what powers the king's household ministers could exercise; the comment about his tenants having been vexed by the king's ministers is likely to have referred to the clerk to the market of the king's household, which paid frequent visits to Warwickshire at this time.⁸⁹ His tenants were obviously aggrieved. The charter has elements of a compromise, combining confirmation of their lord's rights with the liberties of his tenants. It may be significant that the charter does not describe them as burgesses. Through the charter all of Sir Ralph Boteler's direct tenants could claim to be free, regardless of the terms on which they had been holding their properties or the lack of a precise definition of those terms. When in 1487 the rents of assize of Henley's free tenants were reported as amounting to £8 19s 8d, the terminology used is relevant to this argument.⁹⁰ The figure is not far off the £10 3s 6d due from rents in 1419–20. The tenants' grievances about recent exactions by the royal household seem to have been behind the charter of 1449, but it was also an opportunity to regularize their free status.

While the paucity of appropriate earlier records makes it hard to assess the borough's economic performance during the two centuries or more since its creation, the rental of 1419–20 nonetheless helps to assess Henley's economic position in the early fifteenth century. Although the lack of information on the rents paid by sub-tenants, presumably at commercial levels, is a hindrance to an assessment of the town's economic situation,

⁸⁶A. C. Reeves, 'Boteler, Ralph, first Baron Sudeley', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (revised January 2008): <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/50152>> [accessed 30 September 2022].

⁸⁷Macdonald, ed., *Register of the Guild*, p. 164.

⁸⁸*Calendar of Patent Rolls, Henry VI. Volume 5, 1446–1452* (London: HMSO, 1909), p. 258.

⁸⁹Christopher Dyer, pers. comm. C. Dyer, *Bromsgrove: A Small Town in Worcestershire in the Middle Ages*, Worcs. Historical Soc., Occas. Publications IX (2000), pp. 56–7, explains that the clerk to the market accompanied the royal household on its travels, and had the function of regulating traders in towns in or near to the royal route, fining them for any trading offences. The charter's reference to the steward and marshal of the household, in addition to the clerk to the market, suggests that the grievances were part of wider discontent in England over corruption and incompetence in the royal household and increases in royal purveyance to fund the war in France, on which see M. Hicks, *The Wars of the Roses* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 62–4.

⁹⁰VCH, *Warwickshire*, III, p. 208.

the rental shows that there were only a few vacant holdings, which indicates that it was far from being in terminal decline. Most discussions about the fluctuating fortunes of towns in the wake of the successive plagues of the fourteenth century have to rely on fragmentary evidence. In Stratford-upon-Avon, for example, there was no repeat of the survey of 1251–2, and other sources of evidence have been used to suggest a mixed picture – one which combines prosperity in some aspects of its economy and decline in others – and variations over time.⁹¹ Being a small market town, near the bottom of the urban hierarchy in the west midlands, Henley's strength may have lain in meeting a continuing demand for everyday goods and services to people living nearby who did not need or want to travel further afield to Stratford or Warwick and, secondly, in its position on a main road between Stratford in the Avon valley and north Warwickshire. The tenants' claims in relation to burial rights and their secular liberties suggest that there was an active group of leading men in the town. Their activities may have helped to promote prosperity for their successors, whose economic fortunes may be reflected in new buildings, such as the fifteenth-century gild-hall, and also private buildings, some of which are of characteristic late fifteenth-century style.⁹²

One of Henley's medieval domestic buildings has been subject to internal structural analysis, including tree-ring dating. The earliest part of 150 High Street is a two-bay cross wing with a crown-post roof (said to be very rare in Warwickshire) with dragon ties. The timbers in the cross wing were found to have a felling date of spring 1345; the infill framing to the cross wing walls had felling dates of winter 1436–37, winter 1439–40 and spring 1440; the timbers in the part-floored hall range had a felling date of spring 1451 (with this range perhaps having been preceded by an open hall); the south end had timbers felled in the spring and summer of 1433; and the south end's porch extension had timbers felled in the spring and summer of 1465 and the summer of 1471. The tenants of this property evidently had enough disposable income to make extensive improvements and additions to the building by the fourth decade of the fifteenth century and to continue such work in later decades.⁹³

As a record of small borough lordship, the rental of 1419–20 was rare in the combination of its extent and date. Whereas the surviving rentals for Stratford-upon-Avon and Birmingham pre-dated the plagues and the huge fall in population which occurred in England in the second half of the fourteenth century, the rental for Henley recorded the situation seventy years after the first outbreak of plague. It shows that, despite the fall in the real value of the lord's rents from the town since its foundation c. 1200 and the general decline of burgages across late medieval England, successive lords of Henley managed to maintain a rental income which was higher than that recorded at the end of the thirteenth century and comparable to that enjoyed by the bishop of Worcester in the fifteenth century in respect of Stratford. The tenurial arrangements which the rental reveals can be used to suggest what might have been happening in at

⁹¹Dyer, 'A successful small town', *passim*.

⁹²For the gild-hall: VCH, *Warwickshire*, III, p. 206. Its ground floor was originally in stone, and one might speculate that the stone came from the derelict Beaudesert castle. For other buildings: Nathaniel Alcock, pers. comm.

⁹³N. Alcock and R. Meeson, 'Henley-in-Arden, The Heritage Centre, 150 High Street (SP 150 658)', *West Midlands Archaeol.*, 42 (1999), 109–15; D. Miles and M. Worthington, 'List 126: Oxford Dendrochronological Laboratory, General List', *Vernacular Architecture*, 33 (2002), 81–9, at 87.

least some other small towns for which such records do not survive. It may therefore make a wider contribution to urban history in the late medieval period.

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Transcript of the 1419-20 rental

Redd[iti] infr^a burg[um]

Joh[ann]es Berkar (Barker)⁹⁴ te[net] lib[er]e p[er] cart[am] quodd[am] ten[ementum] nup[er]
Joh[ann]is Hendebury [et] r[edit] p[er] an[num] ii s viii d li⁹⁵

Joh[ann]es Swetton te[net] i gardinu[m] ad vol[untatem] [et] r[edit] inde p[er] an[num] viii d

Joh[ann]es Harp[er]e te[net] i ten[ementum] voc[atam] Sheldonsbern[e] (Sheldonsbarne) et r[edit] inde p[er] an[num] xii d. Et i burg[agium] q[u]o[n]d[am] Joh[ann]is Norton et r[edit] inde ii s. Et ten[et] i ten[ementum] voc[atam] Bollehalle cu[m] i mes[uagio] adjacent[e] et r[edit] inde v s ii d. Et te[net] i burg[agium] voc[atam] Harp[er]esplace et r[edit] inde ii s. Et te[net] i plac[eam] vacua[m] et r[edit] inde i d. Et i plac[eam] voc[atam] horspole (horsepole) et r[edit] i[n]de vi d. Et te[net] i ten[ementum] iux[t]^a ten[ementum] Will[elm]i Buckby (Buckebi) et r[edit] inde ix d. Et i shop[am] voc[atam] le fforge et r[edit] inde xviii d. Et i plac[eam] vacua[m] v[er]s[us] capell[am] et r[edit] inde xviii d. Et te[net] ii celd[as]⁹⁶ ap[u]t Barru[m] (Barra[m]) et r[edit] inde vi s viii d. Et te[net] mediet[atem] un[us] ten[ementi] iux[t]^a ten[ementum] Will[elm]i Heyne et r[edit] xiii d. Et ten[ementum] iux[t]^a ten[ementum] Nich[ola]i Scot et r[edit] i d ob' q' **xxiii s iiiii d ob' q'**⁹⁷

Joh[ann]es Harewell te[net] i mes[uagio] et r[edit] inde p[er] an[num] xiiii d

Will[elmus] Holt de Stodeley te[net] burg[agium] lib[er]e [et] r[edit] inde vi s vii d ob'. Et te[net] i cotag[ium] et r[edit] inde viii d. Et te[net] i ten[ementum] iux[t]^a cotag[ium] (Et te[net] i cotag[ium]) iux[t]^a ten[ementum] Will[elm]i Kyner et r[edit] inde p[er] an[num] ix d **viii s ob' li'**

Joh[ann]es Stokes te[net] i cot[agium] cu[m] al[iis] div[er]s[is] ten[ementis] nup[er] Joh[ann]is Hemori et r[edit] inde v s ii d

Joh[ann]es Coup[er]e te[net] i burg[agium] et r[edit] inde p[er] an[num] iii s vi d

Thom[as] Shyngey te[net] i cot[agium] iux[t]^a ten[ementum] Henr[ic]i Skarlett (Scarlet) et r[edit] p[er] an[num] v d, et te[net] i cotag[ium] iux[t]^a ten[ementum] Joh[ann]is Barker et r[edit] inde p[er] an[num] xii d **xvii d**

Joh[annes] Stokes mag[iste]r Gilde te[net] i burg[agium] nup[er] Will[elm]i Cooke et r[edit] p[er] an[num] iii s x d

Walterus Glou[er] (Glou[er]e) te[net] ad vol[untatem] i cot[agium] nup[er] Nich[ola]i Wybert [et] r[edit] inde vi s viii d

Joh[ann]es Cokkes te[net] i ten[ementum] infr^a Barra[m] voc[atam] Well[e]place et r[edit] inde p[er] an[num] xii d

⁹⁴The names and other text given in round brackets are significant variants found in Mi M 175.

⁹⁵Six entries have *li'* in this position. Its meaning and significance are discussed elsewhere in this article.

⁹⁶Latin *celda* is far more commonly found written as *selda* and occurs in English as 'seld'. Richard Holt notes (pers. comm.) that selds in London alone were complexes of small sales booths with a common entrance, like the Istanbul bazaar, and that 'In other towns I have seen the word used of single booths, though occasionally of what seems to amount to a house tacked on to another property on a main street.'

⁹⁷Bolded sums represent the alleged total of the several rents given in the entry. These totals appear in the manuscript's right-hand margin.

Ric[ard]us Pacwde (Pacwod) te[net] i solar[ium] ad fine[m] de l[e] Bothehalle et r[edit] inde p[er] an[num] iii s iiiii d. Et te[net] i dom[um] voc[at]um le Moothalle et iac[et] in manu d[omi]ni p[ro] def[er]c[t]u rep[ar]at[ion]is et val[et] ult[r]a rep[er]is[as] iii s iv d **vi s viii d**

Joh[ann]es Taillo[r] te[net] i ten[ementum] nup[er] in tenur[a] Joh[ann]is Benley ad vol[untatem] cu[m] quod[am] solar[io] et ii shop[is] que r[edit]ere sol[ebant] p[er] an[num] xvii s, et modo dimittit[ur] p[ro] v s **v s**

Thom[as] Hepkyns te[net] i burg[agium] nup[er] Joh[ann]is Philip (Phelip) sen[ior]is et r[edit] p[er] an[num] i par[iam] cirotec[arum].

Will[el]m[u]s Deyst[er]e te[net] i plac[eam] vacua[m] et r[edit] inde p[er] an[num] xviii d

Agn[es] que fuit ux[or] Galfr[idi] Ive te[net] lib[er]e i burg[agium] et r[edit] inde p[er] annu[m] xiiii d. Et i burg[agium] iux[t]^a ten[ementum] Joh[ann]is Harp[er]e et r[edit] inde p[er] an[num] ii s iii d **iii s vi d li'**

Her[edes] Nich[ola]i Scott (Scotte) te[nent] i burg[agium] cum quod[am] ^{i d ob' q'} cotag[io] voc[ato] Wycheplace et r[edit] inde p[er] an[num] iii s i d ob' q'

Thom[as] Poorey te[net] i ten[ementum] cum i acra ^{v d} t[er]re et r[edit] p[er] an[num] iii s

Ric[ard]us Smyth te[net] i burg[agium] et r[edit] inde p[er] an[num] xiiii d

Thom[as] Shyngey t[enet] i burg[agium] et i cot[agium] ^{xiiii d} iux[t]^a ten[ementum] Joh[ann]is Harp[er]e et r[edit] p[er] an[num] iii s ii d

Ric[ard]us Pratte te[net] div[er]sa burg[agia] et cot[agia] cu[m] i Stayer[a] ^{ii d} ap[ud] Barr[am] nup[er] Will[el]m[i] Lich[e] et r[edit] v s x d

Thom[as] Gurgevyle te[net] ii cotag[ia] nup[er] Rob[er]ti Goldsmyth (Goldesmyth) et r[edit] p[er] an[num] ii s

Agn[es] relict[a] Ric[ard]i Cokkes te[net] i mes[uagium] nup[er] p[re]d[ic]ti Ric[ard]i et r[edit] p[er] an[num] ii s

Will[el]mu]s Baily (Bailly) te[net] i mes[uagium] nup[er] Joh[ann]is North^ampton (Northe^ampton) et r[edit] iii d

Thom[as] Shylmen (Schylmen) te[net] i burg[agium] lib[er]e et r[edit] p[er] an[num] xii d **li'**

Joh[ann]es Swetton te[net] i mes[uagium] nup[er] M[ar]g[er]it[ae] Wyton et r[edit] inde iii s, et te[net] div[er]s[a] burg[agia] [et] r[edit] iii s x d ob' **viii s x d ob'**

Her[edes] Will[el]m[i] ffyfyde (ffyfyde) te[nent] div[er]sa burg[agia] et cotag[ia] et r[edit] inde iii s ii d ob'. Et te[nent] i Stayer[am] (Steyer[am]) ap[ud] Barr[am] et r[edit] inde iii d. Et te[nent] i mes[uagium] nup[er] Joh[ann]is Throcmpton [*sic*] et r[edit] p[er] an[num] ii s **vi s vi d ob'**

Th[omas] Audeley te[net] i cot[agium] nup[er] Joh[ann]is Carpent[er]e et r[edit] inde p[er] an[num] xii d

Joh[ann]es Ive P[ar]ker te[net] i plac[eam] vacua[m] d[omi]ni et r[edit] inde xiiii d. Et te[net] mediet[at]em i ten[ementi] infr[a] barr[am] lib[er]e et r[edit] xiii d **iis iii d**

Mores Body te[net] i ten[ementum] et r[edit] inde iii s

Joh[ann]es atte lee te[net] i cot[agium] cu[m] quod[am] mesuag[io] nup[er] Will[elm]i Scullard et r[edit] p[er] an[num] ii s iii d

Symon[us] [sic] ffelton (felton) te[net] quodd[am] croftu[m] voc[at]um harecroft et r[edit] p[er] an[num] xviii d

Will[elmu]s att ye Well (atte Well) t[enet] i burg[agium] nup[er] Will[elm]i Marculfe et r[edit] p[er] an[num] v d

Joh[ann]es Ive P[ar]ker te[net] ii cotag[ia] nup[er] Will[elm]i Marculfe et r[edit] xxi d

Will[elmu]s Aldershawe t[enet] i cotag[ium] nup[er] d[ic]ti Will[elm]i Marculfe et r[edit] x d

Nich[ola]us Marculfe te[net] i shop[am] apud le Barre et r[edit] inde viii d. Et te[net] i burg[agium] iux[t]^a ten[ementum] Will[elmi] Scott (Scotte). Et r[edit] inde p[er] annu[m] vi d **xiii d**

Will[elmu]s Aldershaw (Aldershawe) te[net] i burg[agium] ^{ii d} et i mes[uagium] nup[er] Ed[mund]i Barker et r[edit] p[er] an[num] xiiii d

Thom[as] Pulton te[net] i mes[uagium] nup[er] Thome att mulne et r[edit] p[er] an[num] vi d

Joh[ann]es Stokes mag[ist]r Gilde ten[et] i mes[uagium] nup[er] Joh[ann]is Hunt[er]e et r[edit] p[er] an[num] viii d

Ric[ard]us Kyn[er]e te[net] i cot[agium] q[uo]nd[am] Joh[ann]is Kyn[er]e et r[edit] p[er] an[num] xvi d

Joh[ann]es Alkok te[net] i burg[agium] et div[er]s[a] cotag[ia] et r[edit] p[er] an[num] iii s iii d

Will[elmu]s Pacwod te[net] i burg[agium] cum cotag[io] et r[edit] p[er] an[num] vi d

Will[elmu]s Bucby te[net] i p[ar]cell[am] t[er]re b[ea]te Mar[ie]⁹⁸ et r[edit] p[er] an[num] ix d

⁹⁸If taken literally, this entry could be read as stating that William Bucby (*alias* Buckby/Buckebi) was holding land which belonged to a church or, at this date, more probably to an altar in a church, dedicated to the Blessed Mary. Such a reading, however, would raise the challenging question of why this tenancy was recorded in a survey of the lord of Henley's lands. Fortunately, two deeds of 1405 and 1413 respectively offer a straightforward explanation. The earlier one refers to 'a message between the tenement late St Mary's and the tenement which John Haumslap . . . then held' (*Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds*, IV, p. 289, A. 8310), and the second one to 'a tenement with a garden adjacent . . . between land of Blessed Mary of Wootton on one side and the messuage called Pycardys Place on the other' (*ibid.*, A. 8311). Since both deeds involve the same parties, it is reasonable to assume that they relate to the same piece of land. If so, the key statement is that in 1405 the land was described as being 'late St Mary's'. In this light the subsequent references can be read as ones to a plot still widely known as 'St Mary's land' (in 1413) or 'Blessed Mary's land' (in 1419–20), even though the putative altar in Wootton Wawen's church had not been holding it for many years. The simplest explanation of *i parcellam terre beate Marie*, therefore, and of the references in the two deeds, is that this land had once been held by a chantry in Wootton Wawen's church from the lord of Henley. It had then been surrendered, perhaps at some point in the late fourteenth century during the various changes in fortune for the alien priory established there, but with the tradition that it had once been held by the chantry remaining fresh in Henley residents' minds. A survey of the priory's possessions taken in 1379–80 mentions rents from Henley (TNA, E 106/11/6), but their source is unfortunately not specified.

Joh[ann]es Lich[e] ten[et] i ten[ementum] q[u]o^ond[am] Alic[ie] Cokes et r[edit] p[er] an[um] xvii d

Joh[ann]es Cokkes te[net] i cot[agium] et r[edit] p[er] an[um] ii s

Thom[as] Cokkes te[net] div[er]s[a] burg[agia] et cot[agia] nup[er] Ric[ard]i Cokkes [et] r[edit] p[er] an[um] iiiii s i d

Joh[ann]es Brugge te[net] ad vol[untatem] i mes[uagium] in le corne chepyng (Chepyng) et r[edit] v s. Et te[net] i cot[agium] nup[er] i[n] tenur^a Will[elm]i (Gillian' sic) Taillo^r (Taillio^r) et r[edit] inde p[er] an[um] xviii d. Et i cotag[ium] nup[er] Joh[an]ne Lawnder et r[edit] inde p[er] an[um] xviii d **viii s**

Joh[ann]es Cokkes te[net] ad volunt[atem] i cotag[ium] [*nuper*] in tenur[a] Will[elm]i Dupyng et r[edit] p[er] an[um] ii s

Est ib[ide]m un[a] shop[a] voc[ata] le fforge nup[er] Henr[ici] Smyth que r[edde]re sol[ebat] v s, cu[m] i plac[ea] noue t[er]r[e] de noue appruat[ionis] que r[edde]re sol[ebat] ii s, m^o[do] n[ihi]l q[ui]a i[n] manu d[omi]ni

Et est ib[ide]m i shop[a] nup[er] Alic[ie] Sowegelder que r[edde]re sol[ebat] iiiii s, n[ihi]l ca[usa] ut s[upra]

Joh[ann]es Vlage te[net] ten[ementum] nup[er] Joh[ann]is Bury et r[edit] p[er] an[um] xiiii d

Johannes Stokes mag[iste]r Gilde te[net] div[er]s[a] burg[agia] et cotag[ia] et r[edit] viii s viii d

Thom[as] Cokkes te[net] i ten[ementum] nup[er] Henr[ici] Smyth voc[at]um Grayesplace et r[edit] p[er] an[um] iii s iiiii d

Will[elmu]s Leyburn te[net] i ten[ementum] nup[er] Thom[ae] Barbo[r] et r[edit] p[er] an[um] xii d

Thom[as] Cokkes te[net] [i] ten[ementum] nup[er] Julian[i]/[ae] Cokkes et r[edit] p[er] an[um] xii d

Joh[ann]es Vlage ten[et] i Steyer[am] apud le Barr[e] nup[er] Joh[ann]is Crowley (Croweley) et r[edit] p[er] an[um] ii d

Joh[ann]es Chaumb[er]leyn te[net] i burg[agium] nup[er] Rad[ulph]i Hanslap et r[edit] p[er] an[um] vii d

Et ten[et] i ten[ementum] quond[am] Will[elm]i Scott (Scotte) ^{vi d} cu[m] i croft[o] ad fin[em] vill[e] nup[er] p[re]d[ic]ti Rad[ulph]i et r[edit] xviii d

Rob[er]tus Plum[er] te[net] i burg[agium] nup[er] Ed[mund]i Hanslape et r[edit] p[er] an[um] xii d

Joh[ann]es Barker te[net] i burg[agium] q[u]o^ond[am] Joh[ann]is Kat[er]neasshe (Kat[er]inasshe) et r[edit] p[er] an[um] iii s

Et te[net] i cotag[ium] iux[t]^a ten[ementum] Ric[ard]i Dorrich[e] et r[edit] p[er] annu[m] ii s

Et te[net] i plac[eam] t[er]re nup[er] p[re]d[ic]ti Ric[ard]i et r[edit] p[er] an[um] ii d

Joh[ann]es Coup[er]e te[net] i cotag[ium] et r[edit] p[er] an[num] i d

Ed[mund]us Barbo[r] te[net] i burg[agium] nup[er] Nich[ola]i Barker et r[edit] p[er] annu[m] iiii d

Est ib[ide]m q[u]o[dd]am croftu[m] infr^a le Barr[e] nup[er] in tenur[a] Nich[ola]i Barker q[ue] r[edde]re sol[ebat] ii s vi d, et iac[et] iux[t]^a p[ar]cu[m] d[omi]ni et val[et] ul[tr]a rep[r]is[as] ii s

Thom[as] Herford te[net] div[er]s[a] burg[agia] et cotag[ia] et r[edit] p[er] an[num] xviii d

Thom[as] Harp[ere] Smyth te[net] i cotag[ium] et r[edit] p[er] an[num] ii d

Will[elmu]s Kyn[er] te[net] i mes[uagium] et r[edit] p[er] annu[m] ix d

Joh[ann]es Brid sen[ior] te[net] i mes[uagium] nup[er] Will[elm]i Kyn[er] et r[edit] inde' p[er] an[num] xii d

Ric[ard]us Bartre te[net] i ten[ementum] sim[iliter]⁹⁹ lib[er]e et r[edit] p[er] an[num] ii s vi d li'

Joh[ann]es Webbe te[net] le dolemedowe et i plac[eam] vacua[m] nup[er] Henr[ici] Tyler et r[edit] p[er] an[num] ix s

Magot Scarlett (Scarlet) t[enet] i cotag[ium] et r[edit] p[er] an[num] iii d

Joh[ann]es Harewell te[net] i gard[inum] et r[edit] p[er] an[num] xiii d

Joh[ann]es Weler et Nich[ola]us Weler te[nent] div[er]s[a] ten[ementa] et r[edde]nt p[er] an[num] vi s

Will[elmu]s Barker te[net] i ten[ementum] nup[er] Ric[ard]i Goldsmyth (Goldsmyth) et r[edit] p[er] an[num] ii d

Abbas de Bordesley te[net] div[er]s[a] ten[ementa] et r[edit] p[er] an[num] iii d li'

Et est ib[ide]m un[a] shop[a] ap[u]^d le Barr[e] q[u]o[nd]am Joh[ann]is Haselholt qui (que) r[edde]re sol[ebat] iii s iiii d m^o[do] in manu d[omi]ni

Joh[ann]es Webbe te[net] div[er]s[as] p[ar]cell[as] t[err]e d[omi]ni et r[edit] p[er] an[num] iii s viii d

S[u]m[m]a x li iii s vi d¹⁰⁰ et i p[aria] cirotec[arum]

⁹⁹Richard Bartre's property was being held freely but the same is not said of the one in the previous entry, which makes our transcription of this word as *sim[iliter]* an inappropriate one. If it is nonetheless right, it might suggest that Bartre's entry was copied *verbatim* from an existing source in which the preceding entry was also for a freely held property. An alternative reading is *suu[m]*. This is tautological in the context of Mi M 214's text (*i tenementum suum*); but Mi M 175 omits the *i* before *tenementum*, which would make the reading *suum* appropriate. This is an unresolvable problem.

¹⁰⁰Our own calculation of the sum of every individual rent recorded in the survey produces a total of £10 18s 0d. This discrepancy can not be resolved completely. Our calculation could immediately be reduced to £10 17s 0d by subtracting a one shilling error of calculation in the survey's third entry (the one for John Harpere); but the compiler would almost certainly have used his incorrectly calculated total of John Harpere's rents (£1 3s 4³/₄d), not the individually recorded ones, and so no such subtraction should be made. Accordingly, our calculated total is 14s 6d higher than the original compiler's. Of this, 11s can be removed for the two shops, formerly Henry Smyth's and Alice Soweogolder's, which, being in the lord's hands, yielded nothing at the time of the survey, thus reducing the discrepancy to 3s 6d. The 3s 4d of the survey's penultimate entry can also be removed, given that it was the sum which used to be paid, but this property too was currently in the lord's hands. Finally, 6d can be removed from the stated rent for the croft within the Barre recently held by Nicolas Barker (on account of the repairs). In sum, these adjustments leave a discrepancy of only 4d.

Translation of the 1419-20 rental

Rents within the borough

John Berkar (Barker)¹⁰¹ holds freely by charter a certain tenement, lately John Hendebury's, and renders annually 2s 8d. freely¹⁰²

John Swetton holds at will one garden and renders annually therefrom 8d.

John Harpere holds one tenement called *Sheldonsberne* (*Sheldonsbarne*) and renders annually therefrom 12d. And one burgage, once John Norton's, and renders therefrom 2s. And he holds one tenement called *Bollehalle* with one adjoining messuage and renders therefrom 5s 2d. And he holds one burgage called *harperesplace* and renders therefrom 2s. And he holds one vacant plot and renders therefrom 1d. And one plot called *horspole* (*horsepole*)¹⁰³ and renders therefrom 6d. And he holds one tenement next to William Buckby's (Buckebi's) tenement and renders therefrom 9d. And one (work)shop¹⁰⁴ called the Forge and renders therefrom 18d. And one vacant plot against the chapel¹⁰⁵ and renders therefrom 18d. And he holds two booths at the *Barre* and renders therefrom 6s 8d. And he holds half of one tenement next to William Heyne's tenement and renders 13d. And a tenement next to Nicholas Scot's tenement and renders 1¾d. **23s 4¾d**¹⁰⁶

John Harewell holds one messuage and renders annually therefrom 14d.

William Holt of Studley holds a burgage freely and renders therefrom 6s 7½d. And he holds one cottage and renders therefrom 8d. And he holds one tenement next to the cottage (And he holds one cottage) next to William Kyner's tenement and renders annually therefrom 9d. **8s 0½d** freely

John Stokes holds one cottage with various other tenements, lately John Hemori's, and renders therefrom 5s 2d.

John Coupere holds one burgage and renders annually therefrom 3s 6d.

Thomas Shyngey holds one cottage next to Henry Skarlett's (Scarlet's) tenement and renders annually 5d, and he holds one cottage next to John Barker's tenement and renders annually therefrom 12d. **17d**

John Stokes, Master of the Gild, holds one burgage, lately William Cooke's, and renders annually 3s 10d.

Walter Glover (Glovere) holds at will one cottage, lately Nicholas Wybert's, and renders therefrom 6s 8d.

John Cokkes holds one tenement within (the) *Barre* called *Wellplace* and renders annually therefrom 12d.

¹⁰¹The names and other text given in round brackets are significant variants found in Mi M 175.

¹⁰²The meaning and significance of 'freely' (*libere*) are discussed elsewhere in this article.

¹⁰³It is unclear if this name means a horizontal rail to which horses could be tethered or 'horse-pool'.

¹⁰⁴Richard Holt notes (pers. comm.) that a *shopa* would usually be both a workshop and a sales outlet.

¹⁰⁵Doubtless St John's church.

¹⁰⁶See above, note 97.

Richard Pacwde (Pacwod) holds one solar at the end of the Boothhall and renders annually therefrom 3s 4d. And he holds one house called the Moothall and it lies in the lord's hand on account of a lack of repair and is worth 3s 4d over and above costs. **6s 8d**

John Tailor holds one tenement, lately in John Benley's tenure at will, with a certain solar and two (work)shops which used to render 17s annually and now is leased for 5s. **5s**

Thomas Hepkyns holds one burgage, lately John Philip (Phelip) senior's, and renders annually one pair of gloves.

William Deystere holds one vacant plot and renders annually therefrom 18d.

Agnes, who was Geoffrey Ive's wife, freely holds one burgage and renders annually therefrom 14d. And one burgage next to John Harpere's tenement and renders annually therefrom 2s 3d. **3s 6d** freely

Nicholas Scott's (Scotte's) heirs hold one burgage with a ¹/₄d cottage called *Wycheplace* and renders annually therefrom 3s 1³/₄.

Thomas Poorey holds one tenement with one acre ⁵/_d of land and renders annually 3s.

Richard Smyth holds one burgage and renders annually therefrom 14d.

Thomas Shyngey holds one burgage and one cottage ¹⁴/_d next to John Harpere's tenement and pays annually 3s 2d.

Richard Pratte holds divers burgages and cottages with a jetty ²/_d at the *Barre*, lately William Liche's, and renders 5s 10d.

Thomas Gurgevyle holds two cottages, lately Robert Goldsmyth's (Goldesmyth's), and renders annually 2s.

Agnes, Richard Cokkes's widow, holds one messuage, lately the aforesaid Richard's, and renders annually 2s.

William Bailly (Bailly) holds one messuage, lately John Northampton's, and renders 3d.

Thomas Shylmen (Schylmen) holds one burgage freely and renders annually 12d. freely

John Swetton holds one messuage, lately Margery Wysten's, and renders therefrom 4s, and he holds divers burgages and renders 4s 10¹/₂d. **8s 10¹/₂d**

William Fyfyde's (Fyfyde's) heirs hold divers burgages and cottages and render therefrom 4s 2¹/₂d. And they hold one jetty at the *Barre* and render therefrom 4d. And they hold one messuage, lately John Throcmpton's, and render annually 2s. **6s 6¹/₂d**

Thomas Audeley holds one cottage, lately John Carpentere's, and renders annually therefrom 12d.

John Ive, parker, holds of the lord one vacant plot and renders therefrom 14d. And he freely holds half of one tenement within (the) *Barre* and renders 13d. **2s 3d**

Maurice Body holds one tenement and renders therefrom 3s.

John at the lee holds one cottage with a certain message, lately William Scullard's, and renders annually 2s 3d.

Simon Felton holds a certain croft called *harecroft* and renders annually 18d.

William at the Well holds one burgage, lately William Marculfe's, and renders annually 5d.

John Ive, parker, holds two cottages, lately William Marculfe's, and renders 21d.

William Aldershawe holds one cottage, lately the said William Marculfe's, and renders 10d.

Nicholas Marculfe holds one (work)shop at the *Barre* and renders therefrom 8d. And he holds one burgage next to William Scott's (Scott's) tenement. And he renders annually therefrom 6d. **14d**

William Aldershaw (Aldershawe) holds one burgage ^{2d} and one message, lately Edward Barker's, and renders annually 14d.

Thomas Pulton holds one message, lately Thomas at the mill's, and renders annually 6d.

John Stokes, Master of the Gild, holds one message, lately John Huntere's, and renders annually 8d.

Richard Kyner holds one cottage, once John Kyner's, and renders annually 16d.

John Alkok holds one burgage and divers cottages and renders annually 3s 4d.

William Pacwod holds one burgage with a cottage and renders annually 6d.

William Bucby holds one parcel of land of the [church of the] Blessed Mary¹⁰⁷ and renders annually 9d.

John Liche holds one tenement, once Alice Cokes's, and renders annually 17d.

John Cokkes holds one cottage and renders annually 2s.

Thomas Cokkes holds divers burgages and cottages, lately Richard Cokkes's, and renders annually 4s 1d.

John Brugge holds at will one message in the corn market and renders 5s. And he holds one cottage, lately in William Taillor's (Taillior's) tenure, and renders annually therefrom 18d. And one cottage, lately Joanna Lawnder's, and renders annually therefrom 18d. **8s**

John Cokkes holds at will one cottage in William Dupyng's tenure and renders annually 2s.

In the same place there is one (work)shop called the Forge, lately Henry Smyth's, which used to render 5s, with one plot of new land of new enclosure which used to render 2s, now nothing because in the lord's hand.

¹⁰⁷See above, note 98.

And in the same place there is one (work)shop, lately Alice Sowegelder's, which used to render 4s, [but] nothing because as above.

John Vlage holds a tenement, once John Bury's, and renders annually 14d.

John Stokes, Master of the Gild, holds divers burgages and cottages and renders 8s 8d.

Thomas Cokkes holds one tenement, lately Henry Smyth's, called *Grayesplice* and renders annually 3s 4d.

William Leyburn holds one tenement, lately Thomas Barbor's, and renders annually 12d.

Thomas Cokkes holds one tenement, lately Julian/a Cokkes's, and renders annually 12d.

John Vlage holds one jetty at the *Barre*, lately John Crowley's (Croweley's), and renders annually 2d.

John Chamberleyn holds one burgage, lately Ralph Hanslap's, and renders annually 7d.

And he holds one tenement, once William Scott's (Scotte's), ^{6d} with one croft at the end of the town, lately the aforesaid Ralph's, and renders 18d.

Robert Plummer holds one burgage, lately Edmund Hanslape's, and renders annually 12d.

John Barker holds one burgage, once John Katerneasshe's (Kat[er]inasshe's), and renders annually 3s.

And he holds one cottage next to Richard Dorriche's [Dorridge's] tenement, and renders annually 2s.

And he holds one plot of land, lately the aforesaid Richard's, and renders annually 2d.

John Coupere holds one cottage and renders annually 1d.

Edmund Barbor holds one burgage, lately Nicholas Barker's, and renders annually 4d.

In the same place there is a certain croft within the *Barre*, lately in Nicholas Barker's tenure, and it (which) used to render 2s 6d, and it lies next to the lord's park and is worth 2s over and above costs.

Thomas Herford holds divers burgages and cottages and renders annually 18d.

Thomas Harpere, smith, holds one cottage and renders annually 2d.

William Kyner holds one messuage and renders annually 9d.

John Brid senior holds one messuage, lately William Kyner's, and renders annually therefrom 12d.

Richard Bartre holds one tenement similarly¹⁰⁸ freely and renders annually 2s 6d. freely

¹⁰⁸See above, note 99.

John Webbe holds the dolemeadow and one vacant plot, lately Henry Tyler's, and renders annually 9s.

Magot Scarlett (Scarlet) holds one cottage and renders annually 3d.

John Harewell holds one garden and renders annually 14d.

John Weler and Nicholas Weler hold divers tenements and render annually 6s.

William Barker holds one tenement, lately Richard Goldsmyth's (Goldesmyth's), and renders annually 2d.

The abbot of Bordesley holds divers tenements and renders annually 3d. freely

And in the same place there is one (work)shop at the *Barre*, once John Haselholt's who (which) used to render 3s 4d, now in the lord's hand.

John Webbe holds divers parcels of the lord's land and renders annually 3s 8d.

Total £10 3s 6d¹⁰⁹ and one pair of gloves.

¹⁰⁹See above, note 100.