

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

**A Century of Change on the Lindsey Marshland
Marshchapel 1540 – 1640**

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by

Teresa Maybury BA Hons

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Abstract

This is a study of how a marshland community on the north-east Lindsey coast interacted with external forces of change in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Marshchapel was chosen to be the particular focus of the study because of the wealth of available sources. The most remarkable of these is the survey of Marshchapel and its 'parent' village of Fulstow, which was drawn up in 1595. The survey includes an accurately drawn, detailed map of the two parishes, showing the churches and houses, the open fields with their furlongs divided into strips and the marshland where salt was still being made. There are two field books, one for each of the parishes. The owner of each furlong is named and its position described and numbered, so that it can be located by matching its number on the map. The measurement of each strip is given in acres, roods and perches and, in most cases, the tenant is named.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw England change from a medieval to a modern society. The pressures of demographic expansion, the growth of towns, soaring inflation and religious changes had far reaching effects on the nature of English society. Change did not begin in 1540 or end in 1640; the choice of dates was influenced, to some extent, by the availability of the documents but, also, by the fact that the century neatly encompassed the period between the Reformation and the Civil War, two significant events in the history of early modern England.

The thesis begins with an overview of the early development of Marshchapel and its origin as a salt making settlement and hamlet of Fulstow, knowledge which is essential if the role of Marshchapel's marshland environment on its version of social life is to be understood. A range of sources, including probate documents and parish registers, is used to examine the underlying economic and social structures of sixteenth and seventeenth century Marshchapel and to investigate the processes of change in this marshland community.

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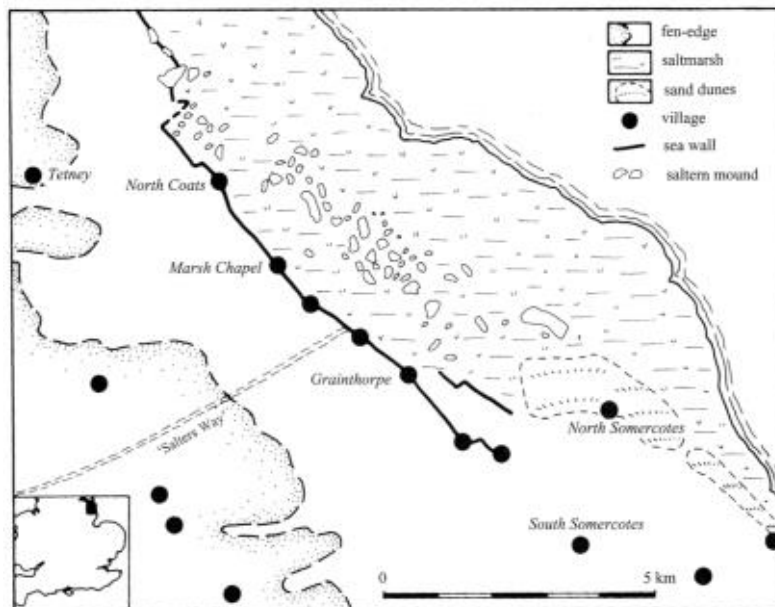
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Introduction

My interest in the communities of the north-east Lindsey marshes developed during the 21 years between 1973 and 1994 when I lived and worked there. After six years working abroad, I returned to Lincolnshire on the eve of the Millennium, to follow up my interest in the history of these Lindsey marshland communities. My initial plan had been to undertake a detailed study of five or six of the coastal settlements of north-east Lindsey in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I was diverted from my purpose, first of all, by the wealth of information contained in the 1595 survey of Fulstow and Marshchapel and, later, by the story of the salt making industry. Gradually, the main theme of the thesis emerged; as the documents were explored, it became clear that this was a society undergoing fundamental change.

Figure 1.1 Marshchapel and neighbouring settlements on the Lincolnshire Coast¹



The decision to focus on the hundred years between 1540 and 1640 was, to some extent, influenced by the availability of documentary evidence. It also coincided with a period of significant socioeconomic change in England, beginning with the effects of the religious changes of Henry VIII and ending on the eve of the Civil War. The survey map covers both Marshchapel and its 'parent' village, Fulstow, and is accompanied by a

¹ Stephen Rippon, *The Transformation of the Coastal Wetlands: Exploitation and Management of Marshland Landscapes in North West Europe during the Roman and Medieval Periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The British Academy, 2000).p.212 after W.G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*, 1981 ed. (London: Book Club Associates., 1955).p.80.

field book for each of the two parishes. Amongst its neighbouring coastal parishes on the marshland of north east Lindsey, Marshchapel claimed particular attention because of the survival of the survey which could provide detailed information about the parish at the end of the sixteenth century. Time did not allow for a full analysis of the available documentation for all the coastal parishes or for Marshchapel's parent village, Fulstow, though some evidence from each of them has been utilised to confirm, to contrast or to illuminate at various points throughout.

It is now more than fifty years since Joan Thirsk described the farming regions of Lincolnshire and set out to show that there was a link between the landscape, the type of agriculture that was adopted and, in turn, the socioeconomic structure. Lincolnshire, she believed, could serve as a model for counties throughout the country. She anticipated, for example, that the husbandry and social structure of the marshes of Essex would be similar to those of the marshes of Lincolnshire. Changes in size of population could also have its impact on the type of agriculture adopted, so the two should be studied together.² More recently Peter Fleet emphasised the significance of inheritance customs on social structure. He argued that, on the Isle of Axholme, partible inheritance was an agent of change which had not been sufficiently acknowledged. He concluded that partible inheritance had a more significant effect on the socioeconomic system of Axholme than had enclosure. It led to the breaking up of landholdings until they were too small to maintain a family and, ultimately, to land becoming concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy farmers.³ Margaret Spufford's study of three Cambridgeshire villages, one on chalk, one on clay and another on fenland, in which she found that the different landscapes produced three different versions of social life, led her to the conclusion that, though all villages are unique, there are patterns in the way that they develop. 'Without these microcosmic studies', she wrote, 'we cannot fully comprehend the richness, the variety, and the entirety of the life of the world in pre-industrial England.'⁴

² Joan Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Methuen, 1957).

³ Peter Fleet, "The Isle of Axholme, 1540-1640. Economy and Society" (PhD, University of Nottingham, 2002).

⁴ Margaret Spufford, *Contrasting Communities: English Villagers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Guildford: Sutton Publishing, 2000), Margaret Spufford, *Figures in the Landscape; Rural Society in England 1500-1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).p.20.

Marshchapel's position on the marshland of the north-eastern coast of Lincolnshire has been a significant factor in the development of its economy and its version of 'social life'. Such coastal marshes have been described as 'marginal' because they were considered unsuitable for settled agriculture and, therefore, believed to have been exploited only when conditions in surrounding areas, for example, population pressure, soil exhaustion or climate change, forced people to settle less desirable land. However, Rippon prefers to think in terms of the more positive concept of 'landscape potential'; coastal marshlands could have a 'pull' factor. He describes three main ways in which communities can use coastal wetlands. First, they can 'exploit' them by making use of the range of resources they offer: salt marshes can provide rich seasonal grazing and the opportunity for salt making; they can offer craft materials in the form of willow, reeds and rushes; food such as fish and wild fowl and fuel in the form of peat. Secondly, communities can 'modify' the landscape to increase productivity. This usually means controlling the water by digging ditches and building low banks to improve conditions and so extend the grazing season. Thirdly, communities can 'transform' the landscape by building a sea wall to keep out the tides all year round and by creating a more complex drainage system to control the water on the newly protected land.⁵

It was the first of these options which was adopted by the early settlers in what is now Marshchapel and in neighbouring communities. They were attracted to the coastal wetlands by the opportunities for salt making and seasonal grazing. With some modification over the centuries to improve grazing, salt making continued to be combined with stock feeding to form the basis of the economy of these coastal settlements until the beginning of the seventeenth century, though the balance between the two activities changed over time.

1.1 Forces of Change

In the opening chapter of their study of change in the parish of Terling in Essex in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Wrightson and Levine claim a larger purpose in writing about a single village:

⁵ Rippon, *The Transformation of the Coastal Wetlands: Exploitation and Management of Marshland Landscapes in North West Europe during the Roman and Medieval Periods* p.1-7; Mark Bailey, *A Marginal Economy? East Anglian Breckland in the later Middle Ages*, ed. J.C. Holt, vol. 12, *Cambridge studies in medieval life and thought. Fourth series* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).p212.

In its experience we are seeking to discern the manner in which national and local development intersected in a period in which the evolution of English society was peculiarly influenced by the nature of their interaction. If we are to fully understand the convergence of forces that shaped the nation in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we must uncover the processes of change at work in the smaller worlds of county and village.⁶

The concern of this study is to attempt to reconstruct the small world of Marshchapel and, in the words of Wrightson and Levine, ‘uncover the processes of change at work’ in a marshland community in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The remainder of this chapter prepares the groundwork, first, by identifying some of those external agents of change which affected the people of Marshchapel as they lived their daily lives, secondly, by considering the sources and the methodology employed and so defining more precisely the scope of the thesis.

The communities of the north-east Lindsey marshland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may appear to have been remote but they were not insulated from national events and were subject to the processes of change which affected the rest of the country. Some of the ‘better sort’ had connections at county or even national level and most villagers of lower status had wider horizons than simply their own parish. The population was far from static; the image of a rural society in which most inhabitants rarely left their village of birth was shattered by Laslett more than thirty years ago.⁷ Many adolescents left home to work in service in other parishes, adults migrated in search of work or land and some moved out of their home parish on marriage. There were those, like the salters, who travelled long distances to sell their wares. There was social and economic interaction between communities on the marsh and the market town of Louth: evidence of just one example of Marshchapel residents who had ties outside the parish is provided in the will of Edmund Cowper who died in 1547. He required his son to seek advice from Gilbert Blanchard in distributing the money he bequeathed to the poor. Gilbert was a member of an important Louth family. He was a mercer; served five times as churchwarden; he became Warden of the town Corporation in 1557 and held this office on four other occasions before his death in 1587.⁸ National

⁶Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village; Terling, 1525-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995). Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village; Terling, 1525-1700*.p.1.

⁷ Peter Laslett, "Clayworth and Cogenhoe," in *Family life and Illicit love in earlier generations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).pp.65-102.

⁸LAO LCC Wills 1547-9/83. J.E Swaby, *History of Louth* (London: 1951)., p.116.

news and views were spread through cheap literature and, though few could read, information must have been exchanged by word of mouth at church, at work and in the ale houses of the villages and the market towns.⁹ Mitson's finding in her study of seventeenth-century Nottinghamshire might equally be applied to Marshchapel: 'Whatever their social status ... no villager who has come under scrutiny in this study was isolated within the boundary of his parish of residence'.¹⁰

Religious changes

There is no doubt that the inhabitants of Marshchapel were engaged in the religious changes that were taking place at national level. At least one local man is known to have been involved in the Lincolnshire Rising which began in the neighbouring market town of Louth in October 1536.¹¹ The causes of the rising were complex and have been discussed in some detail elsewhere.¹² However, there is little doubt that some of the main concerns of the people of Louth and surrounding towns and villages were the break with Rome, which was effected in 1534 by the Act of Supremacy, the dissolution of the monasteries and the suspicion that their own church buildings and church plate might also be at risk.¹³ Documentary evidence indicates the popularity of the parish church of St. James and the pride in which it was held by the people of Louth. It was only 21 years earlier that they had celebrated placing the weather cock upon the newly built spire which had taken 15 years to complete.¹⁴ On the whole, the people remained loyal to the king, it was his advisers whom they distrusted. They must have been severely shaken when, in March 1537, ten local men were brought back from Lincoln to be hanged publicly as traitors in the market square and a few weeks later, when they

⁹ Spufford, *Figures in the Landscape; Rural Society in England 1500-1700*.pp.6-7.

¹⁰ Ann Mitson, "The Significance of Kinship Networks in the Seventeenth Century: South West Nottinghamshire," in *Societies, Culture and Kinship 1580-1850*, ed. Charles Pythian Adams (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1993).p.24.

¹¹ Swaby, *History of Louth*.p.123.

¹² Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400-c1580* (New Haven & London: Yale University, 1992), G.A.J. Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*, ed. Joan Thirsk, vol. VI, *History of Lincolnshire* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 1975), R.W. Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the politics of the 1530s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), Geoffrey Moorhouse, *The Pilgrimage of Grace: The Rebellion that shook Henry VIII's throne* (London: Weiden & Nicolson, 2002), Anne Ward, *Lincolnshire Rising 1536*. (Workers Educational Council East Midland District, 1986).

¹³ M. Bowker, "Lincolnshire 1536: Heresy Schism or Religious Discontent," in *Studies in Church History*, ed. D. Baker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), A.G. Dickens, "Secular and religious Motivation in the Pilgrimage of Grace," in *Studies in Church History* (London: 1967), M.H. & R. Dodds, *The Pilgrimage of Grace 1536-1537 and the Exeter Conspiracy, 1538*, 2 vols. (1915), Hoyle, *The Pilgrimage of Grace and the politics of the 1530s*.

¹⁴ Richard Gurnham, *A History of Louth* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2007).pp.50-65.R.C. Dudding, ed., *The First Churchwardens' Book of Louth 1500-1524* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), R.W. Goulding, *The Building of Louth Spire* (Louth: 1908).

heard the news that Thomas Kendall, the vicar of St James's parish, and William Morland, formerly a monk of Louth Abbey, with ten others involved in the rising, had been hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn.

A hint of the confusion which may have been engendered, in the years that followed, by the changes in long held doctrines of faith can be observed in the will of the same Edmund Cowper quoted above. In the year of the death of Henry VIII and the accession of Edward VI he bequeathed the sum of 25s. for 'a priest for to singe for my soule and for my gudd frends soules and for all suffering soules...yf it be that the kynges busness will allow ytt and yf so be that yt will nott allow ytt for to be done then I will that Edmund Cowper my sonne dispose yt amonge poore people...'.¹⁵ The expression, 'the kynges busness' implies a reference to all of those matters surrounding Henry VIII's divorce, the Act of Supremacy, the break with Rome and other subsequent changes in religious doctrine. In particular, this testator may have had in mind the Protestant denial of the doctrine of Purgatory which Catholics believed was a place where souls suffered for a time after death for sins they had committed during life. If there were no Purgatory there would be no need for prayers for the dead and, therefore, no need for chantries and chantry priests. Abolition of the chantries that same year made way for the raiding of their funds. After 1547, relief of the poor was the only acceptable way to ease the path of one's soul after death.¹⁶

Soon, preambles to the wills began to reflect other changing doctrines as can be seen in successive wills of the Dawson family, one of the long established and substantial families of Marshchapel. In 1547 Christopher Dawson, in the traditional Catholic way, first bequeathed his soul to 'god almyghtie and to our lady saynt mary and to all ye holy company of heven'.¹⁷ By 1556, although the Catholic Queen Mary had been on the throne since 1553, the name of Mary was no longer included when Charles Dawson's soul was bequeathed to 'almighty god and the holy company of heaven'.¹⁸ A further

¹⁵ LAO Inv 16/6, LAO LCC Wills 1547-9/83.

¹⁶ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400-c1580*.p.505.

¹⁷ LAO LCC Wills 1547-9, 126. It should be noted at this point that wills were often written by scribes so such phrases do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the testator and they may sometimes have been used simply as formulae. Margaret Spufford, "Religious Preambles and the Scribes of Villagers' Wills in Cambridgeshire, 1570-1700," in *When Death Do Us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*, ed. Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans, and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2000).

¹⁸ LAO LCC Wills 1552-6, 106.

change of emphasis was apparent with the reference to the Protestant doctrine of redemption; as faith in God alone was the means of salvation there was no need for the prayers of the saints. In 1558, John Dawson left his soul to ‘god the almyghtye and his sonne Jesus Christ which hath redemed me and to all the blessed companye of heaven’.¹⁹ Finally, any suspicion of Catholic belief was removed and there was, perhaps, a hint of Puritanism; no longer was there a reference to Mary or to other saints in the will of John Dawson who, in 1571, left his soul simply ‘to almightie god my maker and redeemer’.²⁰ Elizabeth chose to return England to a form of Protestantism which turned out to be a middle way between the extremes of Catholicism and Puritanism and one to which most of her subjects were able to comply. During the reigns of the two Stuart kings in the first half of the seventeenth century, religious issues continued to be a cause of concern. On the whole, Catholics were willing to be allowed to practise their religion in peace; the Puritans, who continued to be ardent in their proselytising were more of a problem for the government.

Dissolution of the religious houses

Another aspect of the religious changes had a far reaching effect on land tenure and on social structure throughout England as the lands of former religious communities came on to the market. The availability of monastic lands, after the Dissolution, provided an opportunity for those with the means to acquire more land and so to improve their economic and social status. Charles Brandon, first Duke of Suffolk and Henry VIII’s brother-in-law, was initially the chief beneficiary of the redistribution of monastic lands in Lincolnshire. He had first come to prominence in the county in 1525 when he gained the wardship of Katherine Willoughby whom he subsequently married as his fourth wife. She was the heir to 30 manors in Lincolnshire, including the manor of Fulstow and Marshchapel, where she was one of the two major landholders. The Duke of Suffolk became the leading man in Lincolnshire as a result of this marriage, which may have caused some resentment amongst the local gentry and may have been a contributory factor to the ambivalent response of the local gentry to the rising in 1536.²¹

Amongst Charles’s acquisition of monastic property in 1538 were the estates of Louth Abbey, whose land in Fulstow and Marshchapel had been sufficiently extensive to be

¹⁹ LAO LCC Wills 1558 ii, 90.

²⁰ LAO LCC Wills 1571 ii 15.

²¹ Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*.p.32.

recognised as a third manor. When Charles died in 1545, the Willoughby estates reverted to his wife, Katherine, while his estates, including those which had belonged to Louth Abbey, passed to their two sons, Henry and Charles Brandon. The two sons died, within half an hour of each other, on the 14th July 1551, leaving no direct heirs.²² The Suffolk estate was then scattered amongst the descendants of the many daughters of Sir William Brandon, grandfather of the elder Charles Brandon, first Duke of Suffolk.²³ By a process which may never be fully understood, the former Louth Abbey lands in Fulstow and Marshchapel had, by 1595, reached the hands of a Mr. Allington.²⁴

In a county with around 120 religious houses, the Dissolution had a far reaching effect on the social structure of Lincolnshire.²⁵ Lincolnshire was changed from a county in which there were no great noblemen to one in which a few outstanding landholders were dominant. Charles Brandon was the first eminent noble man to become established in the county, but there were others who benefited from the dispersal of former monastic lands. Edward Fiennes, Earl of Clinton, who became established in Lincolnshire on his marriage to the widowed Lady Tailboys, strengthened his position in the county by the acquisition of property previously belonging to Sempringham Priory, Catley Priory and Swineshead Abbey. After the death of the Brandon heirs, he became the most prominent man in the county. He was Lord Lieutenant of Lincolnshire from 1552 until his death in 1585 and was created Earl of Lincoln in 1552. A third peer who benefited from monastic lands and so became prominent in the county was Thomas Manners, twelfth Baron Ros of Hamlake and first earl of Rutland. He became a great favourite with Henry VIII and was involved in the suppression of the rebellion in 1536. He acquired the site of Belvoir Priory and much of its lands as well the land of the Templars at Eagle and those belonging to the Abbey at Kyme.²⁶

Acquisitions of monastic lands by those further down the social scale may have had a deeper effect on social structure.²⁷ Some purchased monastic lands while others acquired it through connections at court. Amongst those who fell into both categories were local gentry such as the Heneages of Hainton and the Tyrwhits of Kettleby. Others

²² Ibid.p.52.

²³ Ibid.p.51.

²⁴ LAO RA 2B2.

²⁵ Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*.p.9.

²⁶ Ibid.pp.51-52.

²⁷ Ibid.p.52.

who improved their social standing by purchasing their land include the Skipwiths, the Dymokes and the Carrs. Some wealthier yeomen purchased land of former religious houses directly from the Court of Augmentations especially after 1544. Many bought smaller parcels from 'land agents', such as John Bellow and John Broxholme, who played a prominent part in the purchase and sale of monastic lands in Lincolnshire.²⁸ Some parcels of land in Marshchapel belonging to smaller religious houses were acquired by these two entrepreneurs. It is difficult to trace the transfer of such land but it is possible that some of the wealthier farmers on the Lindsey marshland improved their status by acquiring land from such sources.

Inflation

While new opportunities were opening up for those at the top of the social scale, other changes came about during this period which brought hardship for the smaller peasant farmer, for the wage earner and for the poor. Between 1541 and 1650 the population of England almost doubled from two and three quarter million to five and a quarter million.²⁹ The growth in population led to greater demand for goods, especially basic essentials such as food. Between 1500 and 1650 prices of agricultural products rose by nearly 550%.³⁰ Wages increased but not enough to keep pace with inflation so that, by the second decade of the seventeenth century, the purchasing power of the agricultural worker's daily wage was only 44% of its level in the second half of the fifteenth century.³¹ The wealthier land holders could profit from the rise in prices while the poor struggled to survive. In times of poor harvest and food shortages, prices rose but the smaller husbandman was unable to take advantage of the higher prices as he needed all he could produce to feed his family. In times of plenty, prices fell and he could make little profit from his surplus products. Many small landholders lost their land under these pressures and again it was the rising yeoman or 'parish gentry' who benefited.

There was a gradual polarisation of society in which the 'better sort' in the villages grew more prosperous and began to identify themselves with the county gentry rather than with their fellow parishioners. New attitudes to land holding deepened this division

²⁸ Ibid.pp.55-62.

²⁹ E.A Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871; a reconstruction*. (London: 1981).pp.207-211.

³⁰ Peter Bowden, "Agricultural Prices, Farm Profits and Rents," in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1500-1640.*, ed. Joan Thirsk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).pp.594-595.

³¹ Ibid.p.600.

between rich and poor. Land had become a marketable commodity and the sense of social responsibility that land ownership had previously carried with it was beginning to be eroded. The growing number of landless poor, the increase in vagrancy and the fear of unrest led the Elizabethan government to introduce legislation in an attempt to deal with the problem at local level.

Changes in agriculture

By the 1590s farming techniques were much as they had been a century earlier, but things were about to change.³² Old and new landowners were encouraged by inflation to begin to look closely at ways in which they could increase their profits, often with little concern for the rights or welfare of the poor. To the landowner the copyhold was an archaic system of land tenure which left him with a fixed rent in a time of rising prices and restricted his ability to reorganise the use of his land. By the end of the century many landowners sought to change to leasehold tenancies so that they could impose shorter leases and higher rents on their tenants.³³ The seventeenth century saw the development of professional estate managers who were, increasingly, employed by the gentry to ensure that their estates were managed efficiently and profitably. Lord Robert Willoughby, who had succeeded his father Lord Peregrine Willoughby as one of the two lords of the manor of Fulstow and Marshchapel, was advised by John Guevara to employ skilled staff under the direction of a lawyer, who would act as steward and solicitor, and an accountant who would receive rents. This would leave him time for his 'more noble occasions' but, he was advised, he should continue to act as his own auditor 'for more have been undonn by blindfold expense than by youthfull courses'.³⁴

Farmers looked to new methods to exploit the land, to enclosure and to larger units of production. Thirsk's research led her to the view that, in Lincolnshire, it was the marshland peasants who suffered most from the inevitable social changes that resulted from the new ways of land management. Marshland pasture was let in large blocks for high rents to wealthy, non-resident farmers, and the villagers of the marshland parishes grew poorer.³⁵ Before the end of Elizabeth's reign, plans for drainage schemes were

³² Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*.p.66.

³³ Clive Holmes, *Seventeenth Century Lincolnshire*, ed. Maurice Barley, vol. VII, *History of Lincolnshire* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 1980).p.21-24.

³⁴ Ibid.pp.71-72. LAO 2ANC 14/7.

³⁵ Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*.pp.54-57,142-158.

being drawn up in Lincolnshire but Lord Peregrine Willoughby had not been an enthusiast. He argued that, because of the high rents that would have to be paid to cover the cost of improvement, a man could make more in a week by cutting reeds and catching and selling fish and wild fowl than he could in some months by using the land as pasture.³⁶ Nevertheless, an act facilitating reclamation was passed in 1600 and, in the first half of the seventeenth century, on the Isle of Axholme and the Lincolnshire fens the great drainage schemes of the Dutch engineer, Cornelius Vermuyden, were put into operation despite local opposition.

This enthusiasm for exploiting the land more fully and the availability of the new techniques inspired other and often smaller drainage schemes. The Stuart kings, desperate to fill the royal coffers, encouraged the drainage of new lands which they could then claim belonged to the Crown. In return for a contribution to the cost of drainage, investors would gain a share in the newly drained lands. One such project, carried out at Somercotes a few miles south of Marshchapel, was particularly well documented, partly as a result of the opposition of the local people. Charles I granted the marsh of Somercotes to Endymion Porter, one of his six Grooms of the Bedchamber. In 1632, Porter signed an agreement with one Edward Tottie, gentleman of London, who had ‘by his endeavours found and discovered certain marsh grounds’ in North and South Somercotes, for which he was to receive one sixth of the drained land.³⁷

The work was carried out between 1633 and 1634. There was to be a forty foot way to the sea and the rest of the 2,200 acres was to be divided into four equal parts. Porter was to choose the first quarter, another quarter would be shared between the commoners and Sir Gervase Scrope, High Sheriff of Lincolnshire and the lord of the manor, who received an additional 170 acres. A further 120 acres was to be put in trust for the poor. The remainder went to Porter and another investor, Sir Nicholas Fortescue, whose share Porter bought out a few years later.³⁸ The commoners’ 511 acres was shared out in the following proportions: six acres for every large farm, four acres for every small farm,

³⁶ Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*. pp.75-76.

³⁷ TNA SP 16/371.

³⁸ LAO Longley 5/30.

three acres for every great cottage and two acres for every lesser cottage. The land was to be held at a fee farm rent of 6d. an acre which Charles II later sold for £50.4s.6d.³⁹

Endymion Porter had little opportunity to benefit from his acquisition, firstly, because of local opposition and, secondly, because of the outbreak of the Civil War when the banks were broken down and the marsh used once more as common land. The year after Endymion's death in 1649, his son, George Porter, who had deserted the Royalists in 1645, managed to regain his father's 1000 acres in Somercotes. It was still in the hands of the Porter family in the eighteenth century.⁴⁰ This example illustrates the process by which other less well documented land drainage schemes on this coast may have been put into effect and the ways in which land ownership of a parish could be changed as a result. By 1638, 600 acres in North Cotes and Marshchapel had been drained.⁴¹

1.2 Sources and methods

For the first time, the 1595 survey of Fulstow and Marshchapel is fully analysed, providing remarkably detailed information about aspects of the economic and social structure of the two parishes at the end of the sixteenth century. The bulk of other documentary material comprises the parish register and the probate documents. The earliest surviving probate documents date from the 1530s. The parish register, which becomes sufficiently reliable for Marshchapel only in the final quarter of the sixteenth century, is incomplete in the years immediately following 1640. As we have seen, the years between 1540 and 1640 coincided with a period of social and economic change which had deep and lasting effects on the shape of English society. They also cover the period in which the Marshchapel salt industry came to an end. Drawn up in 1595, almost at the mid-point between 1540 and 1640, the survey provides a base line against which those changes can be measured.

The 1595 survey of Fulstow and Marshchapel

The 1595 survey, which is described more fully in Chapter Two, provides a snapshot of the two villages of Fulstow and Marshchapel as they were at the end of the sixteenth

³⁹ Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*.p.147;LAO Longley 5/30, TNA SP 16/223, TNA SP 16/371.

⁴⁰ LAO Emeris 29/22, TNA E 125/17.

⁴¹ D.N. Robinson, *The Book of the Lincolnshire Seaside*. (Buckingham: Barracuda Books Ltd., 1981), David Robinson, "The North East Coast of Lincolnshire: A Study in Coastal Evolution" (University of Nottingham, 1956).p.17.

century. The meticulous care with which the map is drawn inspires confidence and comparison with a modern map clearly confirms the accuracy of its scale. Each furlong on the map is identified by a number which corresponds with a number in the field book where the measurement of each strip is recorded with the name of its owner and, in most cases, the name of the tenant. The name of the tenant is provided only where the owner is one or other of the two lords of the manor; subtenants are not identified. Areas of pasture, meadow, arable and common land were originally distinguished by colour. The colour is now faded but they can still be identified by reference to the field books. Each of the tiny houses drawn on the map represents an actual building as it existed in 1595. Indeed, some of the larger houses can be identified as the homes of named individuals. Features of the two churches are recognisable in the buildings that stand today. This is especially true of Marshchapel where the church building remains much as it was in 1595. A drawing of a 'salt cote' marks each location where salt making continued. Evidence from the field book has made it possible to identify the owner of each site and also the tenant, where the owner is either of the two lords of the manor, and thus provided clues to the identity of the individuals who were working each of the salt making sites at the end of the sixteenth century.

Parish registers

The keeping of registers of baptisms, marriages and burials was made compulsory in 1538. It is not possible to know whether a parish register is absolutely reliable but there are often indications in the way the register has been maintained. Some clergy were less efficient than others, gaps appear in some registers, sometimes it becomes apparent that the incumbent has grown old or sick whereas others appear to be carrying out their duty very conscientiously. Occasionally, revealing comments were added, perhaps about the state of the weather or the souls of their flock. In some cases, the original register is no longer extant or is not available and it is the bishop's transcript that must be relied upon. Clearly, there is the possibility of further error in the transcribing and there is sometimes confusion over reconciling different dating systems. Ideally, both the original and the transcript will be available. Because of the close ties between Marshchapel and Fulstow which are explained in Chapter Two, the registers of both settlements have been analysed. The earliest available entries in each of the registers are contained in the bishop's transcripts for 1561-1562 but neither register has survived intact before 1589-1590. In both cases the bishop's transcripts and the originals can be compared only from

the 1590s. Aggregative analysis of the registers of both parishes has revealed useful information about population trends. The technique of family reconstitution which 'uses record linkage to knit together from individual records of birth (baptism), marriage and death (burials) the life histories of all the members of a family' has been applied to the Marshchapel register.⁴² Family reconstitution has been hailed as one of the most important recent innovations in the field of population history but the technique is sometimes considered to be of little value unless it is carried out on a large scale over a number of parishes.⁴³ The scope for reconstitution of the Marshchapel register is limited in that it can cover only two or three generations before 1650. Nonetheless, and in spite of the laborious nature of the task without the aid of electronic means, it was undertaken in the case of Marshchapel and it has revealed information that could not have been gained in any other way. The value of information gained in these ways from the parish register is enhanced when it is combined with evidence from probate documents.

Probate documents

There are 162 extant inventories for Marshchapel in the Lincolnshire Archives Office up to and including those for 1650, the earliest dating from 1533/4, and there are 128 wills covering the same period. Although they had formed part of probate administration at least since the thirteenth century, probate inventories have survived in significant numbers only since 1529, when an Act of Parliament established new rules governing the probate process. The Act required that an inventory of the moveable goods of the dying or deceased should be drawn up in the presence of two persons who were either creditors or legatees or, failing that, next of kin, or as a last resort, two other honest persons. In practice, they were frequently witnessed by three or four of the neighbours of the deceased. It is not possible to check the accuracy of individual inventories but a study of a number of these documents gives the impression that the task was generally undertaken conscientiously. There is evidence that valuations were often given in rounded amounts, for example in the frequency with which exact fractions of a pound appeared, such as 3s.4d, 6s.8d and 13s.4d. On the other hand, where specialist knowledge was required to assess value, as in the case of tools of a

⁴² E.A. Wrigley, "Population History: Recent Changes and Current Prospects," *Local Population Studies*, no. 81 (2008).p.7

⁴³ E.A. Wrigley, ed., *An Introduction to Historical Demography from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966). pp.96-195.Wrigley, "Population History: Recent Changes and Current Prospects."p.7.

trade, an effort would often be made to find an appraiser with the necessary expertise.⁴⁴

The Act established the fees that should be charged by the administrators for the processing of probate inventories. As no fee was payable for inventories valued at less than £5, the church authorities were probably less inclined actively to encourage the production of inventories for those whose moveable goods were likely to be valued at less than that amount after debts were paid. As a result the poor are underrepresented in the documents that survive. Because the goods of married women at death went directly to their husbands, women are represented only by a few of the wealthier widows and unmarried women. It is also likely that some inventories were lost or destroyed.

The earliest extant inventory for Marshchapel dates from 1533, more than half a century before Haiwarde drew up his survey and the point at which the parish register becomes reliable as an historical source. An indication of how representative the 162 surviving inventories are likely to be can be estimated by comparing the number of probate inventories with the number of adult burials recorded in the parish register in each of the six decades from 1590, the earliest date at which the register becomes consistent. This can vary widely from place to place and over time. In a study of seventeenth century inventories, Overton found that the proportion of surviving inventories to burials of adult males and widows varied from parish to parish, ranging from 10% to 60%.⁴⁵

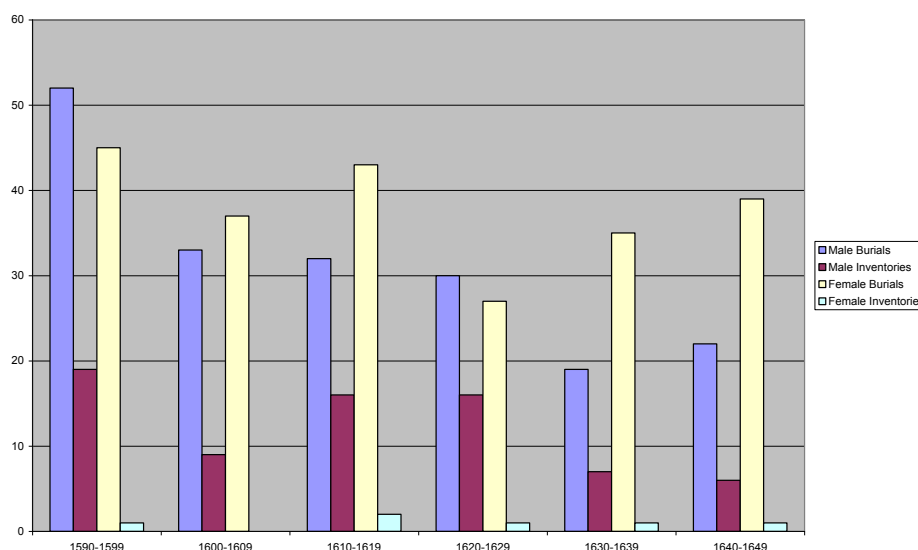
The results set out in Figure 1.2 demonstrate that the probate inventories for the 60 years between 1590 and 1649 in Marshchapel are representative of just less than 39% of adult male burials and fewer than 3% of adult female burials or approximately 19% of all adult burials. As a representative proportion of the community, these figures compare favourably with those that emerge from studies of some other parishes in the area. For another marsh community, the parish of Clee a few miles to the north of Marshchapel, the figures for surviving inventories between 1601 and 1640 are a little more than 28% for adult males and just under 7% for females, an overall total of a little

⁴⁴ Jeff Cox and Nancy Cox, "Probate 1500-1800," in *When Death Do Us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*, ed. Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans, and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2000). pp.20-30.

⁴⁵ M. Overton, "English probate inventories and the measurement of agricultural change," in *Probate inventories: a new source for the historical study of wealth, material culture and agricultural development*, ed. A. van der Woude and A. Schuurman (Utrecht: 1980). p.209.

more than 12%.⁴⁶ For the parish of Barnetby, a village on the Wolds to the north west of Marshchapel, the 34 surviving inventories for the years 1585 to 1670 represent 23% of adult burials in the same period and for the market town of Market Rasen, 20% of male adult burials between 1597 and 1602 are associated with a surviving probate inventory.⁴⁷

Figure 1.2 Numbers of surviving inventories compared to numbers of Burials in Marshchapel between 1590 and 1649



The total value of goods as calculated by the appraisers who drew up the inventories does not always reflect the true wealth of the deceased, most especially because real estate is not included. However, while bearing this in mind, the figures may be used for the purpose of comparison and to identify trends. Other items in the inventory can provide an indication of the comparative wealth of an individual. In spite of the limitations, probate inventories are valuable documents; they are unique in the detail they contain about many aspects of every day life in the early modern period. Information regarding the main economic concerns of a community, as well as some vivid details of domestic life, can be extracted from a close study and analysis of a number of inventories.

⁴⁶ R.W. Ambler and B.& L. Watkinson, eds., *Farmers and Fishermen. The Probate Inventories of the Ancient Parish of Clee, South Humberside 1536 - 1742.*, *Studies in Regional and Local History* (Hull: School of Adult and Continuing Education University of Hull., 1987).p.4

⁴⁷ David Neave, ed., *Tudor Market Rasen-Life and Work in a Sixteenth century Market Town* (Market Rasen W.E.A. & University of Hull Department of Adult Education, 1985).p.3; Neil Wilkin and Barnetby W.E.A., *All Things Forgotten: Village Life in Barnetby in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (W.E.A Barnetby Branch, 1999).p.6.

Like the probate inventories, wills do not represent the very poor and women are underrepresented. Allowing for these limitations, wills can be revealing. Because the will would often refer to real estate, it can supplement the inventory, where both documents survive, to provide a fuller indication of the economic and social status of an individual. Most wills begin with a preamble indicating the hopes of the testator in relation to the salvation of his or her soul followed by wishes concerning the choice of burial place, which is usually in the parish church or church yard. These preambles can be revealing of individual or changing attitudes to religion. Patterns of bequests can shed light on family structure and friendship networks and even, sometimes, suggest more intimate details of family relationships. An individual's bequests might indicate his attitude to the poor or his view of his own social status, whereas a wider study of wills can shed light on the prevailing attitude of a society or community to issues such as charitable giving.

Other Documents

Documents drawn up for ecclesiastical and fiscal purposes, including the Diocesan Returns of 1563, the Liber Cleri of 1603, the Protestation Returns of 1642 and the Compton Census of 1676, have been used, chiefly, in the study of demographic trends. The Poor Law records, which could have been invaluable had they been available, unfortunately have not survived. The church court records for Lincolnshire are not easily accessible, not only because most of them are in abbreviated Latin and in handwriting which is difficult to decipher but, also, because they are 'inadequately catalogued'. The manorial records of the manor of Fulstow, which includes Marshchapel, are extensive but they, too, have not been fully catalogued, though a few extracts have been printed.⁴⁸

1.3 Main research aims of the thesis

To establish the nature of the society and economy of a marshland community in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries

The historical and topographical backdrop against which the people of Marshchapel lived their lives is sketched out. The survey of 1595, the probate documents, the parish registers and other available documents are used in an attempt to reconstruct the

⁴⁸ E.L. Royall, *The Manorial History of Fulstow* (Ilfracombe: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1977).

economic and social structure of the parish and the attitudes and experiences of its people in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

To explore the interaction of that community with external forces

Answers to questions about the influence of external forces are teased out. How far and in what ways was Marshchapel affected by the demographic, economic, social and religious changes that were taking place during this period. How did the inhabitants respond to those changes. How far was its response determined by its marshland location?

To evaluate the role of the salt industry

The history of the salt industry is summarised and the processes of salt production are described. Individuals involved in the industry in Marshchapel are identified and their roles and status explored. How far can the demise of the industry be seen as one aspect of the wider changes that were taking place locally and nationally?

1.4 The structure of the thesis

In the next chapter, previous literature concerning the early history of Marshchapel is reviewed and its links with Fulstow explained. The 1595 map and accompanying field books of Marshchapel and Fulstow are analysed to reveal the topography and land use of the two parishes, and their similarities and differences, at the end of the sixteenth century.

Demographic trends are examined in Chapter Three. As well as aggregative analysis of the parish register and family reconstitution, documents created nationally for ecclesiastical and fiscal purposes are drawn upon to establish population trends in Marshchapel. In the search for explanations, patterns of marriage age, fertility, baptism and burials, dearth and disease are examined. How far did population trends interact with other economic and social changes of the period? Did the marshland environment play a significant role?

Chapters Four and Five are concerned with the people of Marshchapel. In Chapter Four, landholders are identified through an analysis of the field books. Evidence from parish registers and probate documents provides more detail of the economic and social status

of some of these individuals, who represent the wealthier members of the parish. An attempt is made to quantify the proportion of the population of the village whose names do not appear in the field books and who are, therefore, likely to be amongst the small landholders, landless labourers and the poor.

Chapter Five, based largely upon probate inventories and wills, sets out to paint a broader, more balanced picture of the economic and social structure of the parish. The gentlemen and yeomen of Chapter Four are placed within the context of the parish of Marshchapel as a whole, to be joined by the husbandmen, the craftsmen, the landless labourers and the poor. The chapter explores how the community interacted with external forces and the effect of change on the economic and social structure, on attitudes and on relationships.

Chapter Six is concerned with the salt industry, its history and its role in the community of Marshchapel in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. The question of how far the demise of the salt industry of the north east Lindsey coast was part of the processes of change which were affecting the nation as a whole is discussed. This chapter also provides a case study of how social and economic factors influenced the way in which one community, over centuries, chose to utilise its coastal wetland environment.

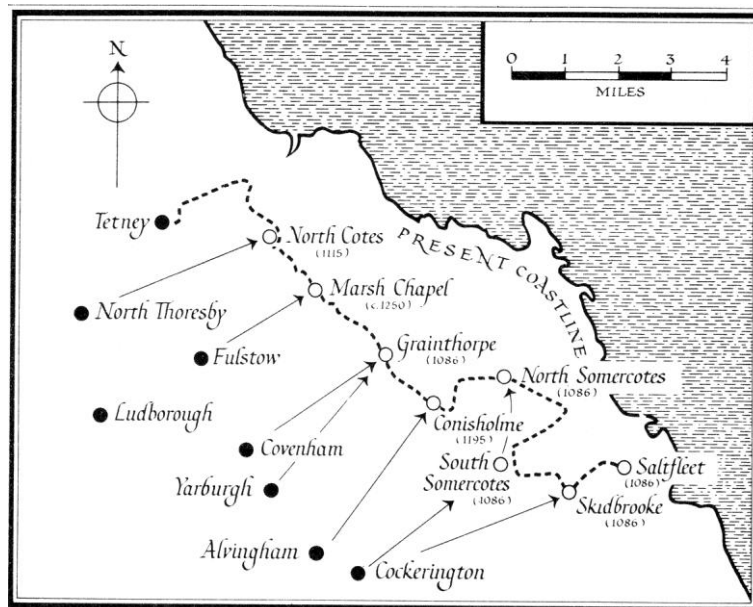
1.5 Summary

As a study of a marshland village in Lincolnshire in the sixteenth and seventeenth century this work is interesting in its own terms but it will also contribute, with other micro studies, to a wider understanding of how communities interacted with external factors in this period. It provides an example of how socioeconomic factors influenced the way in which one marshland community utilised its ‘marginal’ landscape.

A Tale of Two Parishes

This chapter will sketch the backdrop, both historical and physical, against which the people of Marshchapel lived and worked. The development of Marshchapel was inextricably bound to that of Fulstow, its ‘parent’ village, until the early seventeenth century. The historian seeking to understand the earlier history of Marshchapel must look to the Fulstow documents. The overview presented below owes much to the work of Dorothy Williamson and her study of the medieval manors of Fulstow.⁴⁹ The overview is followed by an examination of the survey of Fulstow and Marshchapel which was drawn up by William Haiwarde in 1595. The survey reflects their shared heritage and provides a detailed snapshot of the two parishes as they were at the end of the sixteenth century.⁵⁰ The exploration of the morphology of the two villages at that time is based largely on the evidence from the map and the field books.

Figure 2.1 Early colonisation of the north-east Lindsey marshland showing the relationship between the ‘parent’ and ‘daughter’ settlements⁵¹



Fulstow and Marshchapel are situated in the north-east Lindsey marshland about ten miles south of Grimsby. Fulstow is one of a group of villages established some time during the mid-Saxon period. In this period of settlement nucleation, the most favourable settlement sites were located where the mud flats and salt marsh of the outer

⁴⁹ D.M. Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow," *Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society Reports and Papers*. (1948 -1951).pp.1-55.

⁵⁰ LAO RA 2B1, LAO RA 2B2, LAO RA 2B3.

⁵¹ W.G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*, 1981 ed. (London: Book Club Associates., 1955).p.80.

marsh gave way to the firmer ground of the middle marsh. So came into being the line of settlements from Tetney to Cockerington, today following the 10 metre contour which marks the junction between the middle and outer marshes. An almost parallel line of villages on the higher ground between these settlements and the dip slope of the Wolds has previously been assumed to be of later establishment because their names appear to be of Scandinavian origin, but there is now archaeological evidence of pre-existing settlement.⁵² Denied any possibility of expansion to the west, the coastal villages were able to expand eastwards over the succeeding centuries, as the sea receded and the mud flats and salt marshes dried out. Conditions were ripe for land reclamation which was further facilitated by the mounds of spoil left by the salt making industry, which provided higher, drier ground on which animals could be pastured. A line of 'daughter settlements' emerged and, in time, the more successful of them became independent parishes. Of these Grainthorpe, Somercotes (now North and South Somercotes), Skidbrooke and Saltfleetby were all sufficiently well established in 1086 to be mentioned in the Domesday survey. The earliest documentary evidence for North Cotes is dated 1115 and Marshchapel, the daughter village of Fulstow, first appears in the documents in 1250 (Figure 2.1).⁵³

2.1 Early Development of Marshchapel

Although the name Marshchapel did not appear in the Domesday survey, the 25 salterns with which Fulstow was credited in 1086 would have been on land which is now part of the parish of Marshchapel.⁵⁴ The discovery of a tenth century salt making site south west of the church appears to indicate that the Domesday salterns must have been further to the west than had previously been estimated but well within the subsequent parish boundary of Marshchapel.⁵⁵ The identification of a late Bronze Age salt production site at nearby Tetney leads one to surmise that the industry may also have been practised in the Fulstow marshland as early as 800 BC.⁵⁶ Williamson found documentary evidence of salt making in the community, throughout the medieval period, in salt rents and gifts of salterns and one reported attempt to bribe a coroner with a

⁵² Dr. Helen Fenwick, personal communication.

⁵³ Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*.

⁵⁴ Philip Morgan and Caroline Thorn, eds., *Domesday Book: Lincolnshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1986).

⁵⁵ Helen Fenwick, "Medieval salt-production and landscape development in the Lincolnshire Marsh," in *Wetland Heritage of the Lincolnshire Marsh*, ed. Stephen Ellis, et al. (Hull: Humber Wetlands Project, Wetland Archaeology and Environments Research Centre, University of Hull, 2001).

⁵⁶ C. Palmer-Brown, "Bronze Age Salt Production in Tetney," *Current Archaeology*. 12, no. 4 (1993).

quantity of salt.⁵⁷ The place of the salt making industry in Fulstow and Marshchapel and the role of the salt makers is discussed fully in Chapter Six.

Williamson maintained that Marshchapel had already become a separate economic and social unit, with a way of life different from that of Fulstow, by the mid-thirteenth century, the date of the earliest surviving documentary evidence.⁵⁸ In 1390 the inhabitants of 'Foulestowemersch' petitioned for burials to be allowed in the chapel there. The present church must have been built soon after; in 1420 William White bequeathed a set of bells to the church of Foulestow Marsh.⁵⁹ That name persisted with some variations until the end of the fifteenth century when a further distinction appeared. In 1500, Peter Hilyard was said to hold land in Fulstow, Chapel Marsh and Fulstow Marsh. Another complication was added with the Diocesan Survey of 1563 in which figures were provided separately for Marshchapel, as one of five hamlets of Marshchapel Chapel which itself appeared to be a subsidiary of Fulstow. This distinction was not observed in the Liber Cleri of 1603 in which only Fulstow was named though the figure recorded appears to be sufficiently large to have included the five hamlets.⁶⁰ The church of Marshchapel was referred to as a parish church in diocesan records of 1562 but continued sometimes to be served by the same clergy as Fulstow. The church yard was included in the Fulstow glebe terriers of 1579 and 1601 but by 1635 Marshchapel had a terrier of its own. As late as 1641 Theodore Squire, as Vicar of 'Fulstow Marsh', signed the Protestation Returns for both parishes.⁶¹

2.2 Haiwarde's Survey of Fulstow and Marshchapel in 1595

The 1595 survey map of the two villages came to light in 1933 when it was acquired by a Mr George R. Walshaw at an auction in Brigg in North Lincolnshire.⁶² It had previously been in the hands of a Mr Alfred Atkinson of Brigg; perhaps he was related to the Robert John Atkinson of Brocklesby who had been the Commissioner responsible

⁵⁷ Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow."

⁵⁸ Ibid. pp. 36-37.

⁵⁹ LAO Wills 209 fl; Microfiche 6/17 Reg 16.

⁶⁰ A. Dyer; D.M. Palliser eds., *The Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603.*, vol. New Series 31, *Records of Social and Economic History* (Oxford University Press for The British Academy, 2004). pp.206-207, 403.

⁶¹ House of Lords Calendar of Manuscripts Vol. V. W.E. Webster, ed., *Lincolnshire Protestation Returns 1641-1642* (1984).

⁶² G.R. Walshaw, "An Ancient Lincolnshire Map," *The Lincolnshire Magazine* 1934-1936.

for carrying out the enclosure of Marshchapel in 1846.⁶³ The map was copied by the Ordnance Survey Office soon after its discovery, but the original is still in the possession of George Walshaw's descendants. Over the years, there has been some deterioration in its condition. As part of its millennium celebrations, Marshchapel Parish Council arranged to have the map photographed by the University of Cambridge; a good quality photograph of the original is now exhibited in the village hall. The present owners of the map believe that it may have been staff at Cambridge University who took the opportunity to place the map in the mount that now provides it some limited protection.⁶⁴ One copy of the Fulstow field book and two copies of the field book for Marshchapel, which had been compiled to accompany the map, were found among a large group of documents from Revesby Abbey which were deposited at the Lincolnshire Archives Office in 1966.⁶⁵

The first of the field books is entitled 'Fulstow and Marshchapel' though it contains information only about Fulstow. Inside it is claimed to be 'A booke of the Surveye of the townes of Fulstow and Marshchappell also Fulstow Marsh; made in the thirty seventh year of the reigne of our Sovereigne Ladie Elizabeth etc. taken by the oaths and informacons of the Tenants there'. It is signed on the fly leaf by Walter Campion and Joseph Hodgson. A further note added on a separate sheet is signed by J. Banks Jr and dated 1727. The book is bound in leather and tooled in gold.⁶⁶ One of the Marshchapel field books is similarly bound.⁶⁷ The other copy, dated 1619, is bound in parchment. It claims to be 'a true copy of Thomas Dawsons Booke of Survey taken in the yeare 1619' and 'copyed for Joseph Banks Esq ... by David Mercador. There is an additional note, dated 1 June 1738, signed J.B. which states, 'Mr Monk (or Mook) of Marshchappell has the original of which this is the copy and follows my old survey of Fulstow and Marshchappell'.⁶⁸ This suggests that Joseph Banks was in possession of the map in the eighteenth century and it was probably he who was responsible for having the field books bound. Thomas Dawson, whose field book was copied, was one of the

⁶³ Rex Russell and Eleanor Russell, *Making New Landscapes in Lincolnshire: The Enclosure of Thirty Four Parishes in Mid Lindsey*, *Lincolnshire History Series 5* (Lincoln: Lincolnshire Recreational Services, 1983). p.72.

⁶⁴ Personal communication.

⁶⁵ LAO RA 2/B/1, LAO RA 2/B/2, LAO RA 2/B/3.

⁶⁶ LAO RA 2B1.

⁶⁷ LAO RA 2B2.

⁶⁸ LAO RA 2B3.

chief landholders in Marshchapel at the time of the survey in 1595. The pagination in the two Marshchapel books vary but, apart from a few minor discrepancies which must have been mistakes in copying, the texts appear to be the same.

It is not known for certain who commissioned the survey but it seems likely that it would have been one of the two major lords of the manor at that time, either Lord Peregrine Willoughby of Eresby or Sir Christopher Hilyard. The fact that the field books were found amongst documents relating to Revesby Abbey points to the survey having been commissioned by Lord Willoughby. Joseph Banks of Revesby Abbey had acquired what had once been the Willoughby estate in Fulstow and Marshchapel in the first half of the eighteenth century.⁶⁹ The note written in the Fulstow field book and signed by J. Banks and dated 1727, is probably in his hand. His great grandson, the explorer and scientist, Sir Joseph Banks, was the major land owner in Fulstow at the time of Parliamentary enclosure in 1819. Of approximately 1,980 acres enclosed, he was granted 693 acres. In 1846, Sir Joseph Bank's heir, James Banks Stanhope, was granted 157 acres of the 450 acres that were enclosed in Marshchapel.⁷⁰

There were a number of factors which may have contributed to a decision by Lord Willoughby to go to the expense of commissioning a survey. We saw in Chapter One how there was a new attitude among the gentry towards land ownership and a growing determination to run their estates efficiently in order to make a profit. Professionals were employed to manage estates and new methods of agriculture were adopted. By the end of the sixteenth century, the income which landowners had customarily raised from their tenants had been devalued as a result of inflation. One way in which landowners could increase their profits was to persuade their copyhold tenants to change to leasehold tenure and to accept shorter leases with higher rents and smaller fines. Leases of 21 years or three lives were usually favoured by the land owners. The landlord needed accurate measurement to assess the value of the land in order to draw up new leases. Others needed to make decisions about buying or selling land. The late sixteenth century saw the making of increasingly accurate surveys, made possible by the application of new mathematical expertise and the invention of instruments such as the pocket compass, which indicated the cardinal points and the four-perch line, which

⁶⁹ Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow." p.2.

⁷⁰ Russell and Russell, *Making New Landscapes in Lincolnshire*. pp.7,14, 72-74.

provided accurate linear measurement. Further advances in the early seventeenth century included the theodolite, logarithm tables, the use of triangulation and the iron link-chain, which superseded the four-perch line.⁷¹ According to an inscription on Haiwarde's map, by 1595 none of the land in our two parishes was held by copy. If that were the case, then it was a recent innovation, as we shall see in Chapter Three.

A series of indentures between Lord Willoughby and tenants of his land in Fulstow and Marshchapel seem to suggest that he was following the trend in attempting to maximise profits from his estates.⁷² These documents will be explored in more detail in Chapter Three; at this point it is sufficient to note that each of them is an agreement between Lord Willoughby and one of his tenants for the lease of property for 21 years. All bear the date 1597, just two years after the survey. There is little doubt that Lord Peregrine Willoughby was short of money. He had returned to England in 1589 from the Netherlands where he had been Commander of the English forces. He had incurred considerable personal expense and was seriously in debt. In 1594 he received a letter of thanks from the Queen in which she indicated that he was unlikely to be reimbursed.⁷³ Lord Willoughby died in 1601 at the age of 46; little more than ten years later his son had sold the manor to Sir John Hatcher of Careby. Through Sir John's descendants, the estate eventually came into the possession of the Banks family.⁷⁴

William Haiwarde, the surveyor employed in Fulstow and Marshchapel, was based in East Anglia. Between 1591 and 1636/7 he carried out several surveys in north Norfolk, especially around King's Lynn.⁷⁵ During his long career he appears to have worked on only three projects outside that area, the first being the survey of Fulstow and Marshchapel. The second, a survey of the Tower of London, which he carried out with the aid of one J. Gasgoyne, is dated 1597. Two eighteenth-century copies survive, one held at the Society of Antiquaries in London and another at The National Archives.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965). pp.300-322.

⁷² LAO H7/2-13.

⁷³ David Robinson, ed., *Willoughby: A Village with a Remarkable History* (Willoughby Village History Group, 2003).

⁷⁴ Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow." p.34

⁷⁵ Peter Eden, ed., *Dictionary of Land Surveyors and Local Cartographers of Great Britain and Ireland 1550-1850 Part Two* (Dawson, 1976). p.246.

⁷⁶ Anna Keay, *The Elizabethan Tower of London* (London Topographical Society). p.12 & Colour Plates 1 and 2.

Haiwarde was clearly a skilled draftsman. His survey map of 1595 is a meticulously drafted, detailed plan of the two villages, measuring 11ft by 2ft 10ins.⁷⁷ The remarkable accuracy of the measurements is clearly demonstrated when it is overlaid with a modern map of the same scale. Within an elaborate cartouche, Haiwarde has provided an explanation of how the field books can be used to complement the map. There is also information about the lords of the manor and some important detail concerning the salt industry which is worth quoting in full.

The description and platte of the townes of Fulstowe and Marshchappell with all the particular groundes set down in theire true shape and proportion. The chief lordes are the Lord Willughbie of Earsbye for the manor of Westhall and Sir Christofer Hilyarde for the Manor of Northall.

The whole demesne of bothe the saide manors are let out by lease to divers tenauntes and no partes thereof holden by Copie of Court Roll.

The Lord Willughbies groundes are distinguished by two colours, the meadow groundes being all greene and the other groundes both field and pasture of a straw colour or pale yellow.

Sir Christopher Hilyardes groundes are of a bright yellow or saffron colour.

Mr. Allington's groundes (which were sometime belonging to the Abbye of Louth Parke) are of a roset or peach colour and the glebe lande of the rectories which are impropriations of the said Lord Willughbie are of an ashie or waterie colour. The other freeholdes are left uncoloured. The redd lines are the boundes of the several furlonges so much being accounted to be of that furlonge as is contained within that redde line. The figures of every furlonge serve for the readie findinge out of those groundes in the feilde book as in the beginning of the saide book more plainlie appeareth. The round groundes at the easte end of Marshchappell are called maures and are first framed by layinge together of great quantities of moulde for the making of salte.

When the maures grow greate the salt makers remove more easte and come nearer to the sea and then the former maures become in some fewe years good pasture groundes. Those that have cotages upon them are at this presente in use for salt. The breadth and length of every pece and all the distance of places within this plat are to be knowen by the scale of perches here set downe.

The 'scale of perches' is illustrated with a drawing of a pair of compasses and a measure with the inscription 'The scale of pertches and furlonges by statute measure of 16 feete dimid the pertch'. There are six directional compasses each of them decorated with a different design, all of them pointing south rather than to the north, as is customary

⁷⁷ Walshaw, "An Ancient Lincolnshire Map."

today. Sadly, the original colours referred to by Haiwarde are now faded but the name of the owner is carefully inscribed on each piece of land, even to the narrowest strip.

2.3 Lords of the Manor

Lord Willoughby

The theory that it was Lord Willoughby who commissioned the map seems to be confirmed by the fact that Haiwarde, in his cartouche, refers first to the land owned by Lord Willoughby and, also, that it is only in the case of the Willoughby possessions that he has gone to the trouble of using colour to distinguish between meadow land and the rest. The survival of a group of deeds, now amongst the Holywell collection in the Lincolnshire Archives Office, enabled Dorothy Williamson to trace the ownership of the Willoughby estate back to Domesday. Lord Peregrine Willoughby of Eresby had acquired the property in Fulstow and Marshchapel at the death of his mother in 1580. She was Katherine the sole heir of William Willoughby at whose death in 1525/6, as we saw in Chapter One, she became the ward of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk and, in 1536, his fourth wife. On Suffolk's death she retained the Willoughby property which, at her remarriage in 1552, passed to her second husband, Richard Bertie.⁷⁸ After the death of Lord Peregrine in 1601, his son, Robert, acquired the property in 1604 and in 1612 sold it to Sir John Hatcher of Careby. At that time, the Willoughby manors of Fulstow cum Marshchapel consisted of 28 messuages, 23 cottages, 700 acres of land, 230 acres of pasture, 200 acres of marsh, 60s. in rent charges and an annual charge of six measures and a bushel of salt.⁷⁹ The manor house of Westhall is clearly shown on Haiwarde's map on the western edge of the main settlement of Fulstow. There appears to have been a substantial set of buildings on a moated site. Today the site is occupied by a farm house and evidence of the moat remains.

Sir Christopher Hilyard

Williamson has also traced the ancestry of the Hilyard estate back to the Domesday survey when Picot de Lascelles held land in Fulstow. By the twelfth century the Lascelles were the largest holders of land there.⁸⁰ When Roger de Lascelles died in 1290 without male heir, he divided his possessions amongst four co-heiresses, daughter

⁷⁸ Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow." pp.33-34.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p.34.

⁸⁰ Ibid. pp.9-13.

Matilda acquiring his estates in Fulstow. She married William de Hilton of Swyne and the Hiltons succeeded to the Fulstow estate. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, Isabella, heiress to Robert Hilton, knight, had married Robert Hilyard of Winestead in Yorkshire so that the land passed into the hands of the Hilyards. When Christopher Hilyard, as a minor of 15 years, succeeded his father in 1502 the Hilyard estate included 40 messuages, 1000 acres of arable land, 500 acres of meadow, 1000 acres of marsh and 100 shillings in rent charges in Fulstow, Chapel Marsh and Fulstow Marsh. In 1544, the Hilyards had further extensive estates in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. Another Sir Christopher Hilyard was in possession when the survey was drawn up in 1595 and he was succeeded, in 1602, by his nephew, also Sir Christopher.⁸¹ The Hilyards were still large landowners in Fulstow in 1705 but no longer held land there in 1819 at the time of the enclosure award. The Hilyard moated manor house, known as Northall, can be found on Haiwarde's map next to Fulstow church, north east of the main settlement. It is now the site of a large farmhouse, today known as Manor Farm. There is no certain evidence that the Hilyards ever lived there though Sir Christopher Hilyard's sister married locally. In 1505 she married John Chapman, gentleman and merchant of Thorpe Hall in Louth.⁸² The Hiltons had once owned the advowson of Fulstow church but it had been sold to Louth Abbey in 1383.⁸³ At the Reformation, it passed to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, and then to his widow and so became part of the Willoughby estate.⁸⁴

Louth Park Abbey

The other principal estate which was sufficiently extensive to merit being distinguished by colour on Haiwarde's map, then in the hands of a Mr. Allington, had once belonged to Louth Park Abbey. At the time of the dissolution of the monasteries, the Fulstow holdings of Louth Park had the status of a manor.⁸⁵ The estate had been accumulated initially by various grants of land over the centuries. However, the monks seem to have taken an active part in extending their holding. For example, in 1282 with John Bek and Roger de Lascelles they enclosed part of the common pasture from which they gained 90 acres and in 1337 they received royal licence to enclose and hold in mortmain 140

⁸¹ HHC UDX/235/1.

⁸² J.E Swaby, *History of Louth* (London: 1951). pp.177-178.

⁸³ Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow."p.29.

⁸⁴ Ibid.p.2.

⁸⁵ Ibid.p.25.

acres of the waste of Fulstow.⁸⁶ As we saw in Chapter One, at the Dissolution the estate, with other land in Lincolnshire, was acquired by Charles Brandon, Henry VIII's brother-in-law and friend. Charles sold off some of these lands but still held vast estates in Lincolnshire at his death in 1545. At the death of his two sons in 1551, Charles Brandon's estates were scattered amongst the heirs of their father's paternal aunts.⁸⁷ The identity of the Mr Allington who held the former Louth Abbey lands in 1595 has not yet been established but he was almost certainly George Allington (or Alington) of Swinhope who died in 1632 aged 82. His wife was Jane, daughter of Thomas Morrison of Cadeby, a member of another north Lincolnshire gentry family.⁸⁸ In 1595 Mr Allington held approximately 375 acres in total.⁸⁹

2.4 The Field Books

Although the map alone is highly informative, the field books are the key to a full interpretation of all that it can reveal. The introduction to the field books of both parishes, which appears at the front of the Fulstow book, explains how the village lands are organised. The 'towne of Fulstowe is divided into two partes or precincts'; Marshchapel, on the other hand, is divided into three parts. Beginning with Fulstow, the boundaries of each of the parts or precincts are then described. In effect, the first 'precinct' is the south field, that area of Fulstow which is south of 'the waye headinge from Lugborough directlie through the town' and is bounded in the south by the parish of Calthroppe, now Covenham. The road from 'Lugborough', now Ludborough, runs from west to east dividing Fulstow into two roughly equal parts. The second precinct, the north field, is that area lying north of the Ludborough road and is bounded in the north by the parish of Thoresby. The first and second precincts of Marshchapel, roughly equal in area, lie between Fulstow in the west and 'the highway called Seadyke on the easte'. The first precinct is to the south of the waterway known as the Landyke and bounded in the south by the parish of Warholme, now known as Wragholme. Precinct two lies to the north of the Landyke and is bounded in the north by the parish of North Cotes. The third precinct of Marshchapel is that to the east of Sea Dyke Way, which is now the A1031, the main road running roughly north-south through the village.

⁸⁶ Ibid.P.26.

⁸⁷ G.A.J. Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*, ed. Joan Thirsk, vol. VI, *History of Lincolnshire* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 1975).p.51.

⁸⁸ *Lincolnshire Pedigrees*, A.R. Maddison, ed., *Lincolnshire Pedigrees* (Harleian Society).p.6931.

⁸⁹ LAO RA 2B1, LAO RA 2B2.

The writer goes on to explain how the field books relate to the map.

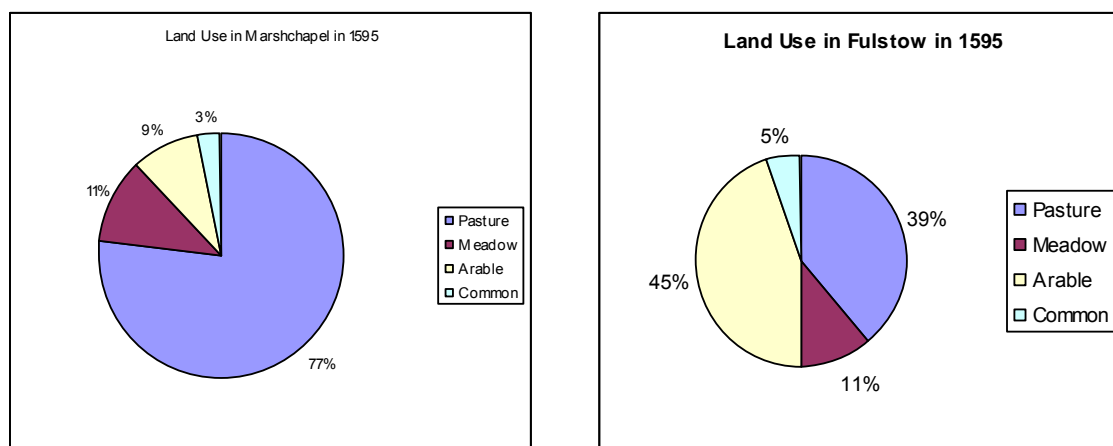
Everie precincte conteineth in it diverse furlongs and everie furlong within the plat (where unto this booke hath reference) is compassed about with a red line & hath a certaine figure signifyinge some number written in it, which doth directe to the like number in the booke for the knowinge of the quantitie of any particular peece and likewise the figure of the furlong in the booke doth directe to the like figure in the platte to see in what manor everie peece of grounde lieth and to understand the perfecte buttelles of it.

We are also told that the ‘quantitie of everie farm is set downe at the ende of the book’ but the index, including this information and the ‘table of proper names of feildes, furlongs and other places’ which, according to the writer, should have been on folio 127 appears to have been mislaid by 1727. Because the first page of the Fulstow book is missing as well as folios 66, 67 and 68, the first furlong of precinct one is lost as well as part of the second furlong and, in precinct two, parts of furlongs 45 and 50 and all of furlongs 46 to 49 are missing. Apart from these relatively minor omissions, the details of each piece of land, its owners and its tenants appear to be complete though, to avoid confusion, the reader needs to be aware that page 51 in the Fulstow book has been placed in the binding in reverse. This is not readily apparent as pages are numbered only alternately, thus both sides of the page or ‘folio’ are numbered 51.

2.5 Land use in Fulstow and Marshchapel in 1595

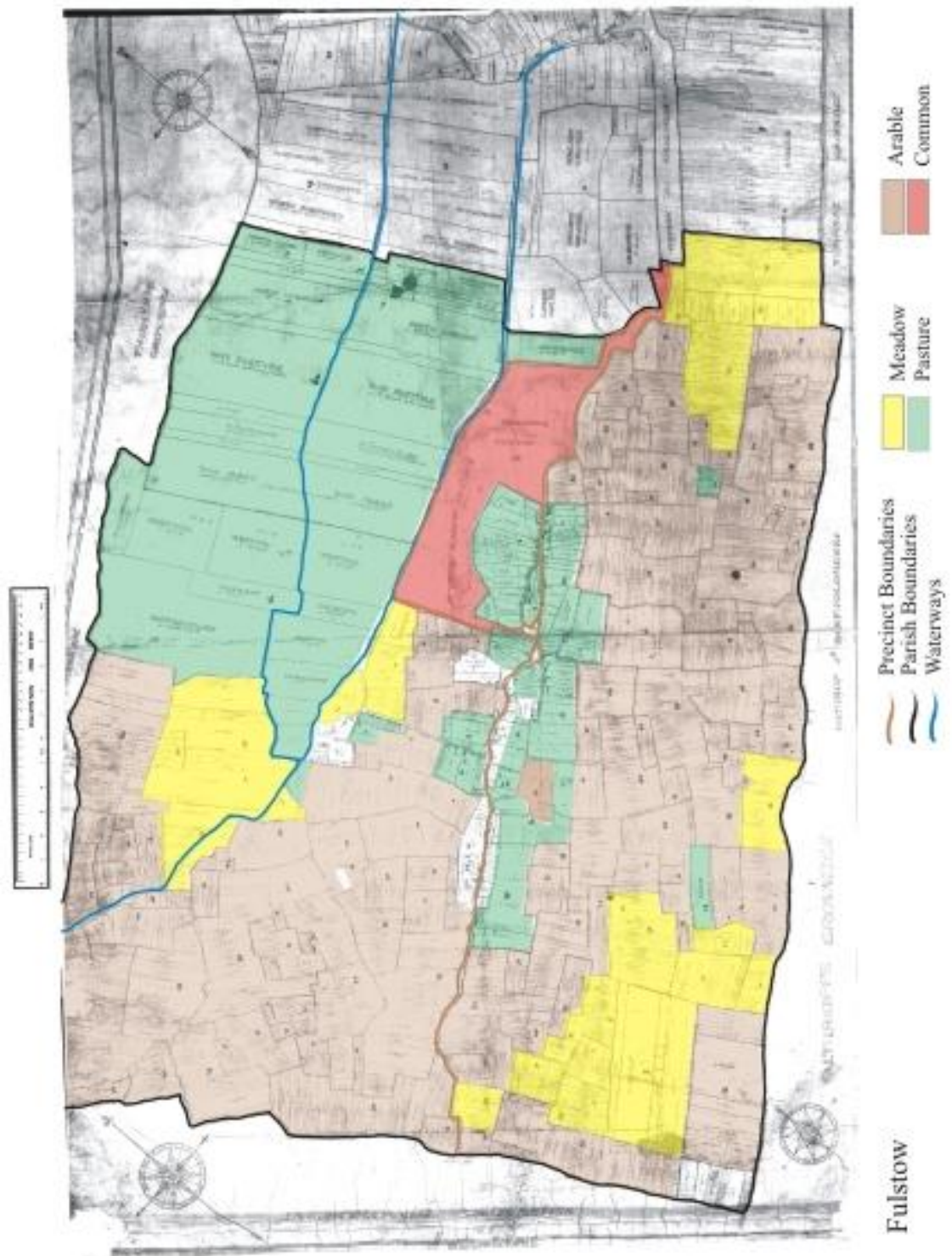
A comparison of the two graphs in Figure 2.2 shows clearly the contrast in land use between Fulstow and Marshchapel; Fulstow is dominated by its open fields, Marshchapel by its meadow and pasture. The graphs indicate the percentages of pasture, meadow, arable and common land in each of the two parishes. It has not been possible to produce absolutely accurate figures, firstly, because of the omissions which have been described above and, secondly, because there was some difficulty in identifying land use with certainty in a relatively small number of furlongs. However, the figures are sufficiently accurate to provide a fair reflection of the difference between the two parishes. Without the missing folios the total acreage for Fulstow amounted to approximately 2,546 acres and for Marshchapel 1,910 acres. In Fulstow 39% of the land was in pasture compared to 77% in Marshchapel while 45% in Fulstow was arable land compared to only 9% in Marshchapel.

Figure 2.2 Comparison of land use in Fulstow and Marshchapel in 1595.



The first precinct of Fulstow, the south field, covers an area of approximately 1,136 acres. This is divided into 87 furlongs varying widely in size, one of the largest being the meadow land of furlong three known as Redde Inges, measuring 56 acres 3 roods and 16 perches, and one of the smallest the five strips of arable land of furlong 17, measuring only 4 roods and 33 perches. The majority of the furlongs are made up of open strips of arable land. Furlongs one to 13 in the south west corner are all meadow land. The details are missing from the field book for the first furlong which is divided into portions of land which may be large enough to be ‘close’ such as those in adjoining furlongs. Furlong two contains 36 acres which includes 24 acres of close, 10 acres of which belongs to ‘the Rectorye’ while 14 acres is ‘demeans’. Furlong three, the Redde Inges referred to above, includes 32 acres of close, eight of which belong to Lord Willoughby and 24 to Sir Christopher Hilyard. It is worth noting that this enclosed land is in the tenure of some of the most substantial men in the community, of whom we shall learn more in Chapter Four. Mr. Ascough farms 12 acres in the second furlong and eight acres in the third, while Thomas Phillips holds the tenure of 24 acres in the third furlong as well as an extensive close of arable land owned by Sir Christopher Hilyard in furlong fourteen. The 25½ acres of meadowland of Conyson, furlong 16, further to the east and on the boundary with Calthrop, now Covenham, includes one acre of enclosed ground belonging to Thomas Cooke. Furlong 29 in the north west of the south field is another furlong of meadow and some small patches of meadow can be found amongst

Fig. 2.3 Haiwarde's map of the parish of Fulstow adapted to show land use in 1595



the arable in furlong thirty two. Another area of meadow is to be found in the south east of the great south field in furlongs 72, known as Shortdale, 73 called Kirdykes, and possibly 75, the Inges. Furlong 77 is described as ‘grass ground’, possibly land temporarily placed under grass or ‘ley’ in order to increase the pasture and, at the same

time, to rest the arable.⁹⁰ The only other significant area of enclosure, apart from those mentioned in the meadow land of the south west, are those in the north of the precinct in the main area of settlement along the road running east and west through the centre of the village. Furlongs 36, 39, 51, 52, 53 and 54 represent the southern side of the village settlement and it is within these furlongs that the messuages, tenements and garths are to be found.

There are two other features of this precinct which claim our attention. Within West Mill Furlong, furlong 41, there is a post mill owned by Sir Christopher Hilyard and in the tenure of Thomas Phillips. If there had ever been a mill in East Mill Furlong, furlong 57, it had gone by 1595. Within the arable land of furlong 27, we find a ‘comon marfar allowed for the town bull’. Two further ‘comon marfars’ are to be found in furlongs 45 and 81, whether or not for the town bull is not made clear. It was customary for the occupant of Westhall to keep a bull, a sheep and a horse for the use of the parish.⁹¹ Before moving on to the second precinct, the great north field of Fulstow, we should also take note of the Common, which is situated close to the main settlement, just to the north and east and backing on to ‘Landyke Sewer’ in the north. According to an inscription on the map, the Common covers an area of 131 acres 2 roods and 14 perches.

The second precinct of Fulstow, north of the main road between Ludborough in the west and Marshchapel in the east, contains 1,400 acres divided into 62 furlongs. It is crossed by the two great drainage ditches, the Landyke and the Waterlad. West of the main settlement, to the north of the main road, in furlong 15, is West Hall, the Willoughby moated manor house, which in 1595 was in the tenure of Mr Ascough. To the east of this, paralleling the development on the south side of the road, are the hedged closes containing the messuages, garths and tenements of the villagers, chiefly furlongs one, two, three, nine and ten. North Hall, the Hilyard manor house in the tenure of Thomas Philips in 1595, is situated further north, next to the church in furlong 13, close to the middle of this precinct. The combination of manor house and church has attracted another smaller development of closes, in furlongs eight, nine, ten, 11, and 12, on either

⁹⁰ Joan Thirsk, *The Rural Economy of England: Collected Essays* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), p.135.

⁹¹ LAO Hill 22/1/9/3/33.

side of the road leading south to the major area of settlement along the main west to east road through the parish.

The second precinct is dominated by two contrasting features; in the west, furlongs 16 to 56, the open fields of mainly arable land divided into narrow strips covering an area of approximately 730 acres and in the east, covering a similar area, furlongs 61 and 62 of enclosed pasture.⁹² Smaller areas of meadow ground can be found between these two, in furlongs 44, 45, 57, 59 and 60. As we saw in precinct one, the wealthier tenants hold large areas in these enclosed lands. Thomas Phillips has 96 acres in furlong 61 and Mr Ascough holds 69. However, most of furlong 62 is 'ioisted out' amongst a large number of smaller tenants in the form of 'gates' or fractions of gates. In furlong 18, known as Pindernear Furlonge are two small parcels of land both called Pinder Greene. Lord Willoughby and Sir Christopher Hilyard are 'lords of the soyle but the pinder hath by custome the seede thereof'. In this same furlong there is also another 'comon marfar'. In furlong 52 amongst the arable there is 'a parcel of meadow ... the becke runninge through the middle of it'. On the west side of that meadow there is 'a parcell of grasse grounde' and there are two more such immediately to the east.

It seems unlikely we shall ever learn more of the circumstances under which the parish of Fulstow was split into two and the separate parish of Marshchapel was born. Perhaps it was the growing size and wealth of Marshchapel which led to the decision. How difficult was it for the interested parties to agree on where the boundary should be placed? The two great open fields of Fulstow were left intact and the boundary was drawn almost perpendicularly through the great pasture in the north, veering to the west only to skirt round the edge of the enclosed pastures that had belonged to Louth Abbey and through the meadow grounds of the South Inges. Precincts one and two are between Fulstow in the west and the Sea Dyke Way in the east. They are divided west to east by the Landyke Drain which enters the parish from the west, approximately half way between the north and the south boundaries, and later takes a sharp turn to the south before continuing its eastward journey, crossing Sea Dyke Way towards the southern third of the parish. The third precinct of Marshchapel is to the east of Sea Dyke Way.

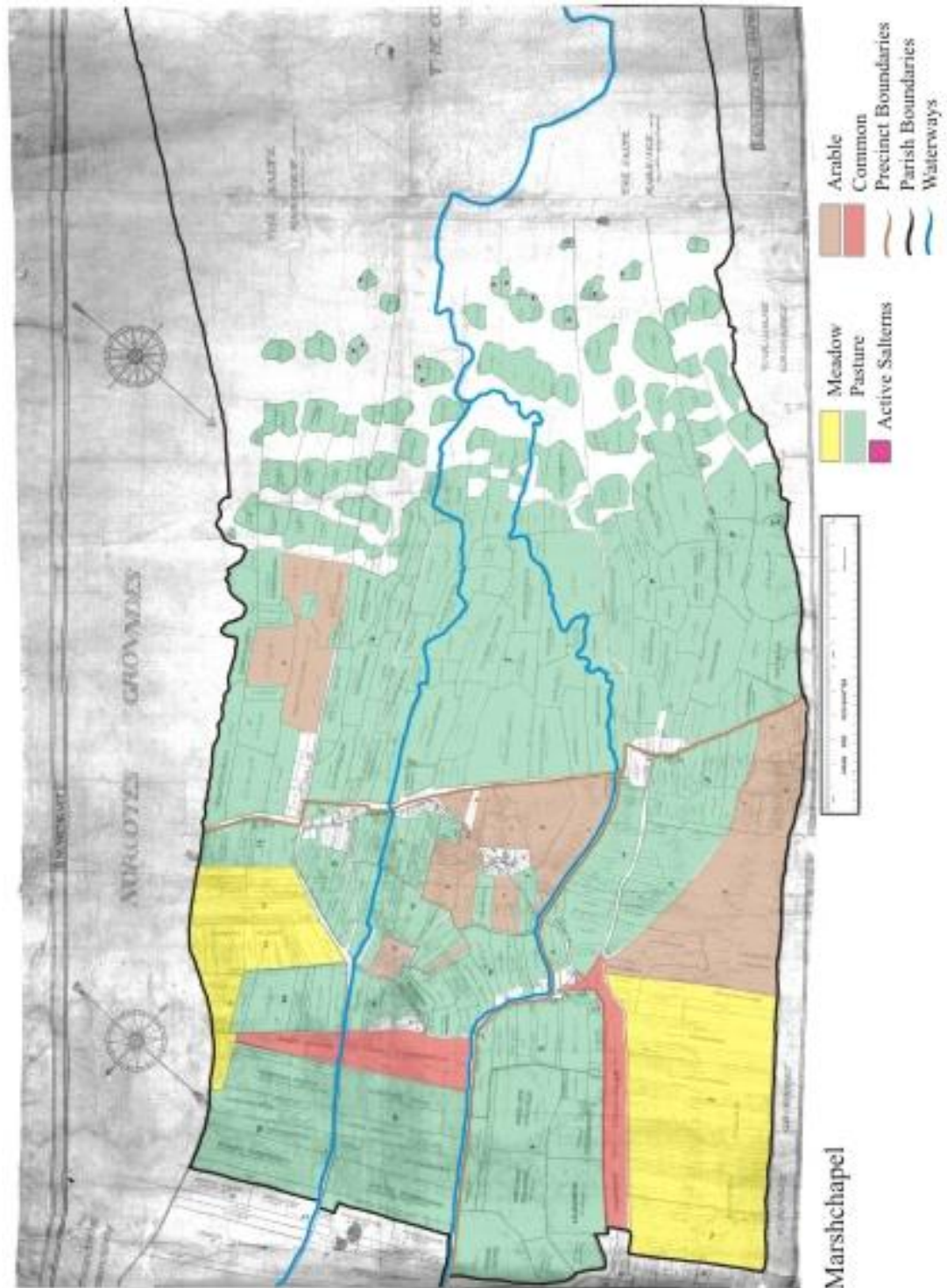
⁹² Russell and Russell, *Making New Landscapes in Lincolnshire*. p.72.

The first precinct of Marshchapel, south of the Landyke, is made up of 11 furlongs, again varying in size. One of the largest is furlong one, an area of pasture in the north west, most of it owned by Mr. Allington. His share includes Lambholme, High Grange, Low or Little Grange, Lilburne, Lilycroft and Great Grange together making a total of 117 acres 3 roods and 6 perches. Added to the 15 acres one rood and 26 perches held by others this gives a figure close to the 140 acres of common that Louth Abbey sought to enclose in 1337. This contrasts in size with the arable ground of furlong five, made up of seven narrow strips and a headland totalling 12 acres two roods and five perches. To the east is furlong two, another area of pasture which, together with furlong one, makes up about one third of this southern precinct. Between furlongs one and two and furlong three in the south west is Kirkedykes Common, measuring 26 acres, 3 roods and 11 perches. To the south of the Common is furlong three which is similar in size to furlong one. The western half is a continuation of the meadow grounds of the South Inges which we first came across in the south field of Fulstow but, towards the east, meadow gives way to strips of pasture. Furlongs eight, nine, ten and 11 are largely enclosed pasture which leaves a relatively small area of open arable in furlongs four, five, six and seven.

The 24 furlongs of the second precinct of Marshchapel, north of the Landyke, are similarly dominated by great swathes of meadow and pasture, particularly furlongs 18 to 24 in the northwest. This seems to correspond, at least in part, with that area of common land which was enclosed in 1283.⁹³ At the eastern end of it in 1595 is situated the 36 acres two roods and ten perches of 'marsh common called Summerhead'. Significantly perhaps, part of the pasture which was enclosed in the thirteenth century was known as Sumerette. Most of the open arable ground is in the vicinity of the church, which is centrally positioned in the parish in the south eastern portion of precinct two. Tiny furlong one, Kirkfeilde, and furlongs two, four, six, eight, nine and 16 appear to be entirely arable and furlongs three, five, seven, ten and 15 are a mixture of arable, pasture and messuages, tenements and garths. There is a Mill Lane and a Mill Hill Pasture but there is no mention of a mill in the field book at this point. Perhaps the name makes reference to the post mill which is drawn on the northern boundary of the parish with North Cotes.

⁹³ Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow." pp23, 46.

Figure. 2.4 Haiwarde's map of the parish of Marshchapel adapted to show land use in 1595



Precincts one and two are bounded on the east by Sea Dyke Way, the main road through the village. It was along this route that the line of ‘daughter’ settlements was established almost parallel to the group of ‘parent’ villages to the west. It was long believed that the

daughter settlements grew up on a sea bank and salt making began to the east of it.⁹⁴ In 1984 this theory was modified by Owen who maintained that these are not bank settlements but, rather, that they grew up on old salterns. As Haiwarde explains in the cartouche, the 'maures' were formed from the building up of great quantities of 'moulde', the silty sand which remained after the salt was removed. Eventually the sea bank was built, incorporating the remains of the 'maures' which provided higher, dryer ground.⁹⁵ A more recent theory suggests that the road follows a natural feature of sand deposits along a former coastline.⁹⁶ It has been proposed that the church of Marshchapel to the west of Sea Dyke Way was also built on the remains of a saltern mound but this, too, has been challenged. The recent discovery of a tenth century salt making site indicates, as we shall see in Chapter Six, that the method of salt making employed at that time would not have produced the mounds of spoil associated with the salt making process described in the cartouche on the map of 1595.⁹⁷

According to the Marshchapel field book, precinct three is divided into five 'parts' rather than 'furlongs'. These five parts, of unequal width, run in parallel from the Sea Dyke Way to the sea, part one being the most northerly. The morphology of the land to the east is very different from that to the west of the main road, reflecting the difference in the way the land developed and came into use for agriculture. It was never divided into furlongs and strips as were the two great fields of both Fulstow and Marshchapel. We learnt from the inscription on the map how the pasture ground to the east of the Sea Dyke Way gradually developed out of the 'maures', the mounds of industrial remains of salt making. The small, irregularly shaped fields of the established pasture nearest to Sea Dyke Way are clearly distinguishable on the map from the detached rounds depicting the developing pasture further east and the active salterns nearest the sea. In 1595 the vast majority of this land belonged to the two lords of the manor, Lord Willoughby and Sir Christopher. Mr Allington held a smaller share, previously the

⁹⁴ Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape*. pp.80, 100; Joan Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Methuen, 1981).pp.51-53.

⁹⁵ A.E.B. Owen, "Salt, Sea Banks and Medieval Settlement on the Lindsey Coast," in *A Prospect of Lincolnshire*, ed. N.; White Field, A. (1984).

⁹⁶ Dr Helen Fenwick. Personal Communication.

⁹⁷ R. Morris, *Churches in the Landscape* (London: Dent, 1989). p.347.Fenwick, "Medieval salt-production and landscape development in the Lincolnshire Marsh." pp.231-241.

property of Louth Abbey, and an even smaller proportion was in the hands of a number of lesser freeholders.

It is clear from Figure 2.5 that the distribution of the land amongst the chief landowners in precinct three was not haphazard; it seems to indicate an agreement which had held good over many centuries. By 1595, Sir Christopher Hilyard and Lord Willoughby were in possession of almost entirely regular alternate strips of pasture land running from west to east. The pattern was maintained even to the ‘round groundes’ nearest the sea. Over the centuries the salterns must have been in the possession of the chief landholders and, as the salt makers moved eastwards, the developing pasture remained in the hands of these same landowners and their heirs. In 1595 we are told ‘the maures that have cotages upon them are at this presente in use for salte’. At that time there were 13 salt ‘cotages’ or ‘cotes’ in all. In the first part there were three on land owned by Lord Willoughby. In part two there were two on land in the possession of Sir Christopher Hilyard. A Mr. Slanee held ‘a maure with 2 saltcoates upon itt’ in the third part, where there was another salt coate on land owned by Lord Willoughby and two on land owned by Sir Christopher. In part four, Sir Christopher owned two ‘maures’ each with a salt cote and Lord Willoughby a ‘maure’ with one salt cote. It appears that salt making had already ceased in the fifth and most southerly part where Mr. Allington’s holding was largely concentrated. The word ‘cote’ with its simplified spelling, as that most commonly used in local contemporary documents, will be adopted henceforth by the writer to denote the huts associated with salt production.

To the east of the third precinct are the salt marshes, ‘called the Fitties which are always drowned at spring tydes’ (Figure 2.6). Still further to the east are ‘The Cockle Sandes’ which, we are told, ‘are overflowen at the cominge in of everye tide, the sea beinge here described as if at ‘deade lowe water’. The Landyke Sewer meanders through the third precinct in a north easterly direction to join the Waterlad just before it passes through the area of active saltern mounds and then crosses the salt marshes and the cockle sands to enter the sea at ‘the new haven’. To the north is a creek marked ‘the olde haven’. Just off the coast are some fine drawings of sailing vessels: towards the south is a sixteenth century ‘carrack’, a large trading vessel; towards the north is an intermediate size trader

Figure 2.5 The third precinct of Marshchapel showing the five ‘parts’ and land belonging to Lord Willoughby, Sir Christopher Hilyard and other freeholders

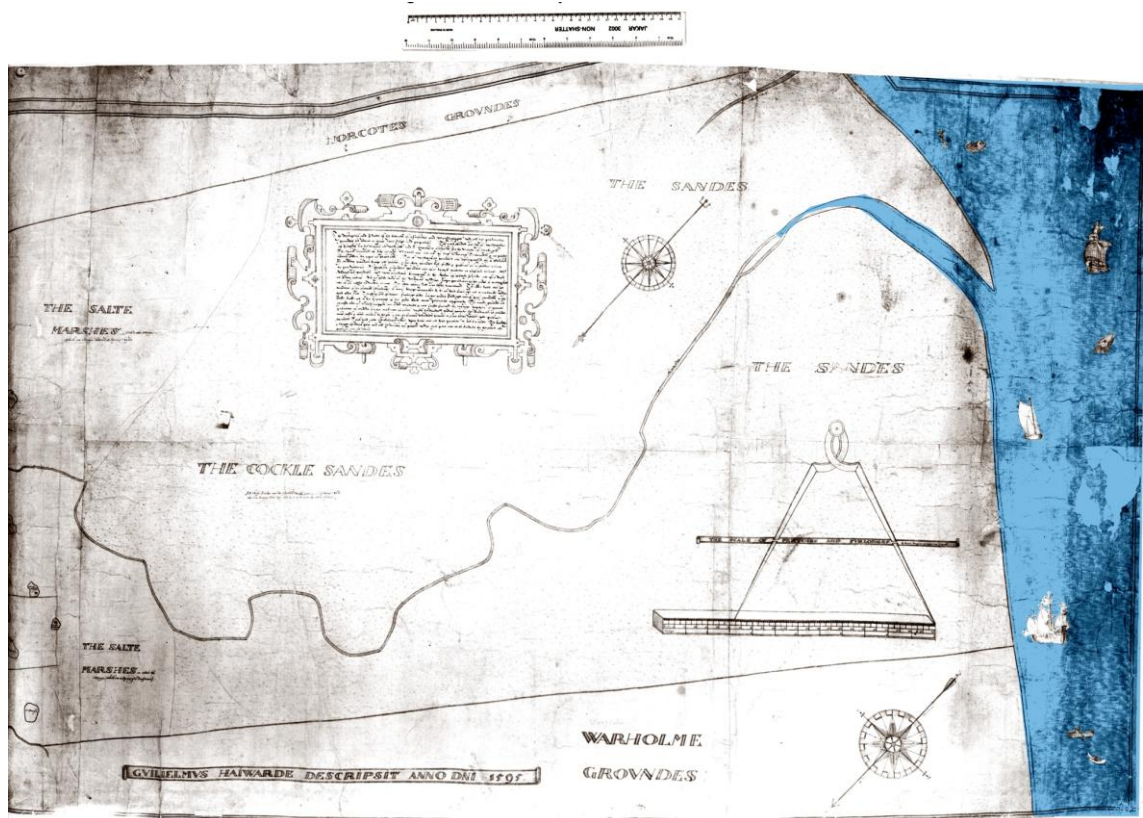


and between the two, a coastal and in-shore craft possibly, covered by the term ‘billinger’.⁹⁸ There are also two rowing boats, one anchored in the creek called ‘the new haven’, another with a man on board. There are some strange and rather fearsome

⁹⁸ Arthur Credland, Keeper Hull Maritime Museum. Personal Communication.

looking sea creatures further north which are more difficult to identify, but perhaps they represent seals, which are a common sight on parts of that coast today, at least in the breeding season in November and December.

Figure 2.6 Extract from Haiwarde's map showing the salt marsh and the cockle sands



One of the many attractive features of the map is the intimacy of the drawings of the 'messuages' each with its red roof and its black doors and windows. The houses are recorded individually in the field books so that, in some cases, it is possible to identify the occupant. In Fulstow, most of the messuages and garths are situated towards the centre of the village on either side of the road which runs from west to east separating the north and south precincts. There is a small cluster of buildings further west, close to the Willoughby manor house of Westhall or West Hall and another to the north, near the church and Northall or North Hall, the Hilyard manor house. Fulstow Common, an area of 131 acres 2 roods and 14 perches, is situated just to the north of the road through the village, close to the main group of houses.

Figure 2.7 Extract from Haiwarde's map showing the centre of Fulstow



Most of the houses are situated on the road between the two precincts. The church is to the north, just west of furlong 13. The Hilyard manor house is just west of the church. West Hall, the Willoughby manor house can be seen in precinct 15. Note the post mill in the first precinct, west of furlong 51.

The pattern of settlement in Marshchapel is less clear and more scattered than that in Fulstow, where the position of the manor houses seems to have influenced the growth of the settlement. There are, of course, no manor houses in Marshchapel but there is a cluster of dwellings near the church. This is probably the hamlet referred to in the Diocesan Survey of 1563 as 'Marshchapel chapel'.⁹⁹ Until 2004, it had been understood that another four hamlets listed were part of the Fulstow settlement.¹⁰⁰ Dyer and Palliser's interpretation of the original document suggests that they were part of the parish of Marshchapel, which was made up of five hamlets.¹⁰¹ The documentary evidence to support this theory is presented in Chapter Three, where the demography of the two parishes is explored. Marshchapel may have developed as Marshchapel Chapel hamlet, just one of the satellites of Fulstow, associated with salt making activity, which became established over time as the sea receded. As time passed, it would have grown

⁹⁹ British Library Harleian Manuscript 618.

¹⁰⁰ Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*, Joan Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Methuen, 1957).p.52.

¹⁰¹ A. Dyer and D.M. Palliser, eds., *The Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2004).

to become more successful than the other hamlets and eventually to dominate them as it became independent of Fulstow. There are small groups of buildings, sited on the map of 1595 within the boundaries of Marshchapel, which are possible candidates for all five of the hamlets (See Appendix II).

Figure 2.8 Extract from Haiwarde's map showing the centre of Marshchapel



This is probably 'Marshchapel Chapel Hamlet', just one of five hamlets of Marshchapel in 1563.

The largest of these clusters of buildings, the group around the church, has already been proposed as Marshchapel Chapel. There is a smaller group to the west of the arable fields, close to the commons and the pasture lands, one of which is called West Marsh Pasture. This area is identified as West End on modern Ordnance Survey maps and may correspond with the hamlet of Westmarsh named in the 1563 survey. Another group of buildings begins at the junction of Church Lane and Sea Dyke Way and continues north along the west side of that road almost to the parish boundary with North Cotes. This may have been the hamlet of Northorpe. It is probable that these dwellings were positioned to take advantage of the higher, drier ground provided perhaps, as has been indicated above, by sand deposits or islands in the till.¹⁰² Further south, Sea Dyke Way bends sharply to form a dog leg and at this point, where it is joined by Eastham Gate, there is another group of buildings. According to the field book this 'part of the town'

¹⁰² Dr. Helen Fenwick, Personal Communication.

was known as Eastham in 1595. Today it is called Eskham, possibly a corruption of Eastkeiholme, the name of a close further to the east on the other side of Seadyke Way, according to Haiwarde's map, and probably corresponds to the Eskome of 1563. Here, again, there is a significant rise in the ground, now the site of a farmstead, and which in 1595 was the site of a group of buildings, the 'messuage and garth' of Thomas Dawson, who was one of the most substantial men of the parish. It was almost certainly the same Thomas Dawson whose field book was copied in 1619 and who is, therefore, partly responsible for making available the document we have today. The road going eastward from this point was called Kame Lane in 1595 but today it is known as Keyholme Road. A little further south a few isolated buildings, including a 'messuage', could be found amongst the pasture grounds. They were situated on the north side of a track called Storre Lane, now Willow Tree Road, running eastwards from Sea Dyke Way, at a place then called East Holme between parts four and five. The word inscribed on the map above the group of buildings may be Easthouse or Esthorpe, and may, possibly, represent the fifth hamlet of Marshchapel in 1563. Eskome and Esthorpe might easily be confused. However, at the latter there were only three communicants whereas there were eight at Eskome, which suggests that it was the larger settlement and would, therefore, more nearly correspond with the settlement at Eastham in the 1595 survey.

There has been remarkably little change in the shape of these two villages over the centuries since 1595. Certainly by the time of parliamentary enclosure, in 1817 in Fulstow and in 1846 in Marshchapel, both of which have been explored by Rex Russell, the main features of Haiwarde's map would have still been recognisable. In Fulstow 'the small hedged closes within which lay all the farmsteads, houses and cottages, remained virtually unchanged in area until 1817; further, the isolated blocks of old enclosure within the south field which are depicted on the Award map of 1819 were already enclosed by 1595: the large area of old enclosure occupying the north east quarter of the parish in 1817 is also shown enclosed by 1595'.¹⁰³ Nearly 1,980 acres were still open fields compared with a little over 796 acres of old enclosure. It was a similar story in Marshchapel though the area of old enclosure was much greater; the land to the east of the Sea Dyke Way had never been open fields. Of the 2,555 acres of

¹⁰³ Russell and Russell, *Making New Landscapes in Lincolnshire*.p.7.

the parish only 453 acres remained unenclosed in 1839.¹⁰⁴ In both parishes, the outlines of the furlongs can still be seen in many of the enclosed fields.

The road pattern is much as it was in 1595 and many of the roads have retained their old names. Few buildings have stood the test of time. There is no external evidence that anything remains of even the most substantial houses that appear on the map in 1595. The two manor houses have been replaced by what appear to be complete new buildings and the home of Walter Harpham, the wealthiest inhabitant of Marshchapel in 1595, has been replaced by a small estate of modern houses known as Harpham's Way. There are some smaller cottages which retain features which suggest that they may have existed when Haiwarde drew up his survey. According to the Marshchapel field book, just to the east of Seadyke Way in the third part of the third precinct, on land owned by Sir Christopher in the tenure of Walter Harpham, there was in 1595 'a pasture called Mill Pasture with the windmill at the west end and the Waterlad on the north'. The map shows a wooden post mill on that spot. At some point, probably in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, it was replaced by a brick windmill, which today stands in ruins. The road approaching this site is still known as Mill Lane.

The churches, built of more substantial materials, have fared better, though Fulstow has suffered more than Marshchapel. On Haiwarde's map the church at Fulstow is seen from the south, so the north aisle is not visible, but there is clearly a south aisle and a tower which is said to have housed 'four gret bells and one Angelus bell'.¹⁰⁵ Today the church is rather a sad affair, the aisles and the tower have gone leaving only the nave, the chancel and a small bell tower. The two worn, recumbent stone figures in the porch are believed to be of Sir Robert Hilton and his wife. Sir Robert, a descendant of the Lascelles family, was one of the lords of the manor and the patron of Fulstow church in the mid-thirteenth century.¹⁰⁶ In 1602 it was recorded of Fulstow church amongst others, 'The churches and chancells of theis severall parishes are well repaired and kept decently'.¹⁰⁷ It seems, however, that Fulstow church was never well endowed.¹⁰⁸ The

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.p.72.

¹⁰⁵ Walter Johnson, "Our Villages. No. 5 Fulstow & Marshchapel, Part 1.," *The Lincolnshire Magazine* 1. p.277.

¹⁰⁶ Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow." p.55.

¹⁰⁷ C.W. Foster, ed., *The State of the Church in the Diocese of Lincoln*, vol. 23 (Horncastle: Lincoln Record Society, 1926).p.230.

north aisle was removed in 1740 and the south aisle was demolished 15 years later. In the same year, the poverty of the parishioners and the church was noted in the Register of Faculties.¹⁰⁹ Marshchapel church is much as it was in Haiwarde's drawing. It remains a substantial Perpendicular building, little altered since the early fifteenth century when it was built, possibly financed from the wealth derived from salt making and the developing pasture.

2.6 Summary

The opening chapters have provided the backdrop against which the people of Marshchapel lived in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Chapter One explored contemporary issues which affected the nation at large, including population expansion, inflation, religious changes, changes in land ownership and the increasing polarisation of society. This chapter has provided some background to the development of Marshchapel and its links with Fulstow and described the morphology of the two parishes in 1595. The coming chapters are concerned with the peopling of that landscape, beginning in Chapter Three with a discussion of demographic trends in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

¹⁰⁸ Stuart Sizer, ed., *Fulstow A History of a Marsh Village* (Fulstow History Group, 2001), Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow."p.80.

¹⁰⁹Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow."p.31.

Life and Death on the Margin

Between 1541 and 1650 the population of England almost doubled from 2¾ million to 5¼ million.¹¹⁰ Evidence presented in the first section of this chapter indicates that, at the same time, the population of Marshchapel was in decline. Some possible explanations for this phenomenon are discussed in the second section. In the third section, analysis of the parish register helps to explore in more detail the demographic trends which affected the lives of the inhabitants of Marshchapel in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and to seek further answers to the question of why this coastal village, like some of its neighbours, experienced a declining population during a period of rapid growth in the nation at large and to begin to consider how this might have affected the social structure of the parish.

3.1 Demographic Trends

The problems relating to the establishment of population figures before the 1801 census have been fully rehearsed elsewhere and any historian attempting to explore the demographics of a locality must be alert to them.¹¹¹ In spite of the difficulties associated with the process, tentative conclusions may be drawn from documents which were created for ecclesiastical and fiscal purposes. Here the Diocesan Returns of 1563, the Liber Cleri of 1603, the Protestation Returns of 1641-1642 and the Compton Census of 1676 are used with due caution to establish population trends for Marshchapel in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Because of the shared history of the two parishes and for purposes of comparison, the data for Fulstow is also included.

Diocesan Returns 1563

The Diocesan Census of 1563 was just one of many government initiatives during Elizabeth's reign which sought information on religious, political, social and economic matters. This new interest in data collection was largely influenced by Cecil as leader of the Privy Council. The enquiry of 1563 arose out of plans to reorganise the system of poor relief at parish level. The Privy Council went ahead with the data collection in

¹¹⁰ E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871; a reconstruction*, 1989 ed. (London: 1981), pp.207-211.

¹¹¹ W.B. Stephens, *Sources for English Local History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp.45-70; E.A. Wrigley, ed., *An Introduction to Historical Demography from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966).

spite of the refusal of Parliament to accept the proposed reforms. The bishops of England and Wales were required to provide information in response to five articles relating to the administrative structure of the diocese. The fourth and fifth of these articles are the ones that are of interest here for they demanded information about each parish, its dependent chapels and hamlets and the number of households in each.¹¹²

The 1563 returns for Lincolnshire are contained in the British Library Harleian Manuscript 618. Though the source is potentially invaluable in any attempt to calculate absolute population figures, there are some issues relating to reliability and interpretation which must be addressed. The first of these is concerned with the accuracy of the original data. In their study of the Diocesan Census, Dyer and Palliser indicated that, in general, the respondents had understood what was required of them and provided the appropriate information. There was evidence of 'rounding' of the figures but in Lincolnshire this was relatively restrained. They concluded that, overall, the returns 'fit into an intelligible and credible pattern'.¹¹³ Where they are available Piracy Commissioners' certificates of 1565-6, having been supplied by secular authorities, provide an independent comparison. In this case, Commissioners were asked to count numbers of houses rather than of households, which may not correspond exactly but must be expected to be similar. Most of the certificates have disappeared or do not cover the same area as those for 1563 but, where both are available, the two figures correspond closely. Fortunately, there is some material available for Lincolnshire but, in that county, no information was supplied where the harbour was a mile or two from the nearest settlement. As a result, there is no Piracy Commissioners' certificate for Marshchapel to compare with 1563 returns, but the two sets of data do survive for Saltfleet, a coastal settlement a few miles to the south of Marshchapel. The ecclesiastical authorities counted 29 households in Saltfleet in 1563, a figure reassuringly close to the 30 houses recorded two years later by the Piracy Commissioners.¹¹⁴

¹¹² A. Dyer and D.M.Palliser, *The Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603*. (Oxford University Press for The British Academy, 2004). pp. xx-xxiv

¹¹³ Ibid. pp.xxv-xxxvii

¹¹⁴ Ibid. p.xxv, n.47, S. Pawley, "Lincolnshire Coastal Villages and the Sea, c.1300-c.1600." (University of Leicester PhD, 1984).

Figure 3.1 Entry for Fulstow and Marshchapel in the Diocesan Returns of 1563¹¹⁵

	familias	Capellae	hamlet	familias in hamlet
1	1			
Disceba. Vir.	200	ul	ul	ul
Sancti mag. Vir	200	ul	ul	ul
Sancti mag. Vir	200	ul	ul	ul
Fulstow Vir	600	Marshall	Northorp Westmarsh Eskome Esthorp Marsh Chapell	200 20 8 3 55
Sancti mag. Vir	200	ul	ul	ul
Sancti mag. Vir	200	ul	ul	ul

Table 3.1 Transcript of 1563 Diocesan Returns for Fulstow and Marshchapel

Parish	Chapels	Hamlets	Families
Fulstowe			69
	Marsh Chapell		
		Northorp	8
		Westmarsh	20
		Eskome	8
		Esthorp	3
		Marsh Chapell	55

¹¹⁵ British Library Harleian Manuscript 618.

The second issue, which is specific to Fulstow and Marshchapel, is concerned with interpretation of the data. Fifty years ago, Joan Thirsk observed that, in 1563, Marshchapel was a large place with 55 families.¹¹⁶ This seemed to be confirmed by figures published in 1975 in which 'Marshchapel chapel and hamlet' appears to be one of five hamlets dependent on the parish of Fulstow.¹¹⁷ A more recent interpretation of the original document suggests that 'Marshchapel hamlet' was one of five hamlets which were part of the 'chapel' of Marshchapel which, in its turn, was a dependant of Fulstow parish.¹¹⁸ The latter interpretation appears to accord with the map of 1595. In Chapter Two, a possible candidate for each of the hamlets of Marshchapel was identified, all of them within the boundaries of Marshchapel in 1595. If that assumption is correct, which seems likely in view of what is known about the early development of Marshchapel, the number of households in Marshchapel would have been 94, many more than had previously been supposed and more than the parent village of Fulstow which would have been left with only 69 households (Figure 3.1 and Table 3.1).

A third issue which must be considered when attempting to calculate absolute population figures based on the 1563 census concerns the size of households. It is possible to use wills and land transfers to estimate the number of children in families though there are dangers. For example, those who left wills are unlikely to be representative of the population as a whole and the numbers of children in these families may not be typical. Neither can we be sure that all children are included. Some may have received their portion before the will was drawn up and some may have predeceased the testator. Whilst recognising these difficulties, Pawley used this method to estimate family size in sixteenth century Skidbrooke, another village on the Lindsey marshes. He found that the mean number of children was 2.3 and concluded that the household size would be 4.3.¹¹⁹ There has been a general agreement amongst historians that average household size remained fairly stable between the mid-sixteenth and early nineteenth centuries at about 4.75 but, depending on local circumstances, the figure could be anywhere between four and five. More recently, Dyer and Palliser came to the

¹¹⁶ Joan Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Methuen, 1957).p.52.

¹¹⁷ G.A.J. Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*, ed. Joan Thirsk, vol. VI, *History of Lincolnshire* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 1975).pp.196.

¹¹⁸ A. Dyer and D.M. Palliser, eds., *The Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2004).pp.206-207.

¹¹⁹ Pawley, "Lincolnshire Coastal Villages and the Sea, c.1300-c.1600." p.306.

conclusion that high mortality in the years preceding 1563 led to an increase in the size of households at that time. They recommend a multiplier of between 5.0 and 6.0, 'accompanied by a great deal of caution'.¹²⁰ Here the estimated populations of Fulstow and Marshchapel are based on an average household size of between four and six. The projected population for Fulstow would then be between 276 and 414 and for Marshchapel, 376 and 564, making a total of between 652 and 978 for the two parishes.

Haiwarde's Survey of 1595

Evidence from the field books of 1595 also appears to support the view that Marshchapel was more highly populated than has previously been supposed and that it contained more households than Fulstow. It seems likely that the number of houses would bear some relationship to the number of households, as appears to have been the case in Saltfleet in 1563. In 1595, apart from the rectory, there were in Marshchapel 12 messuages, one dwelling house, five cottages and 62 tenements, making a total of 81 possible homes. In Fulstow, as well as a rectory and a vicarage, there were two manor houses, 18 messuages, four cottages and 45 tenements, making a total of 71. It is possible that in the 1595 survey the word 'tenement' did not always denote the inclusion of a dwelling but that seems unlikely. The phrase 'messuage or tenement' was commonly used as if the two words were interchangeable. A series of indentures between Lord Willoughby and his tenants in Fulstow and Marshchapel drawn up in 1597 refer several times to the 'saide messuage or tenement'.¹²¹ Richardson defines a tenement as 'rented land or dwelling' and Bristow as a 'holding consisting of house and land'.¹²² Some dwellings may have been occupied by more than one household but it is also possible that some houses were empty, though this would not be in the interest of the owners or, indeed, of the tenants. The same group of indentures specifically require that the properties be maintained in good order. The terms of the lease held by Walter Harpham are typical in requiring him 'for and during the terme aforesaid well and

¹²⁰ Dyer and Palliser, eds., *The Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603*. pp.xli-l.

¹²¹ LAO H7/1-13.

¹²² John Richardson, *The Local Historian's Encyclopedia*, Second ed. (New Barnet: Historical Publications, 1986).p.210; Joy Bristow, *The Local Historians Glossary and Vade Mecum*, Second ed., *Local History Record Series* (Nottingham: Continuing Education Press University of Nottingham, 1994). p.195.

sufficiently [to] repair, maintain, uphold and keepe all and singular the cottages above said in good and sufficient repaire'.¹²³

There are problems in using the survey to identify dwellings in Marshchapel and Fulstow in 1595; any conclusion about the number of households drawn from this evidence must be tentative but it should not be ignored. The total number of households in Fulstow and Marshchapel was 171 according to the census of 1563. Only 152 possible homes are identifiable for the two villages in the field books, which were compiled thirty two years later. On the assumption that the number of houses is similar to the number of households, the population figures for the two parishes for 1595 are calculated, as for 1563, on the basis of a household size of between four and six. The projected population of Marshchapel in 1595 is between 324 and 486 and for Fulstow between 284 and 426, indicating a decline in the population of Marshchapel since the Diocesan Survey of 1563 and a small increase in the population of Fulstow.

The Liber Cleri 1603

The 1603 the bishops of England and Wales were to seek answers to seven questions concerning the state of the clergy and the level of conformism in all the parishes of their dioceses. For the purpose of this study it is the first three questions which are relevant; each 'parson, vicar and curate' was to indicate in writing the number of communicants, the number of male and female recusants and the number of male and female non-communicants in his parish. Fulstow was credited with 400 communicants, no recusants and no non-conformists. As it was not listed separately, one must assume that this would have included Marshchapel.¹²⁴ As with the Diocesan Survey of 1563, questions about the conscientiousness of the vicar and the care with which figures were recorded and copied must be taken into when assessing the reliability of this figure. Even if one is able to accept that, allowing for some rounding up, this is likely to be an accurate assessment there is some disagreement about the appropriate multiplier to employ in extrapolating from a number of communicants to an absolute population figure. Wrigley and Schofield calculated that 32.31% of the population was under 15 in 1641.¹²⁵ Writing about the Compton Census, Whiteman proposed a multiplier of 1.5 on the basis

¹²³ LAO H7/13.

¹²⁴ C.W. Foster, ed., *The State of the Church in the Diocese of Lincoln*, vol. 23 (Horncastle: Lincoln Record Society, 1926). p.323. Dyer and Palliser, eds., *The Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603*. p.lxxx-lxxxi.

¹²⁵ Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871; a reconstruction*. p.529.

that the age of First Communion was about 16 and that young people under that age made up an estimated 33% of the population.¹²⁶ This widely accepted figure has been challenged recently on the grounds, firstly, that the age of First Communion was sometimes 14 or 15 and, secondly, that it fails to take into account those who did not receive the sacrament for other reasons, for example illness or disinclination. Dyer and Palliser maintain that the figure should be at least 35% but could be as much as 45%-50%¹²⁷. Here, a range of 33%-50% is assumed; the application of a multiplier of 1.5-2.0 indicates a total population for the two parishes of between 600 and 800. When compared to the figures for 1563 and 1595, this indicates a further decline in the combined populations of Marshchapel and Fulstow.

Protestation Returns 1641-1642

All males over 18 were required to take the Protestation Oath of 1641/2. In Marshchapel and Fulstow, it was reported that none refused, so we can be cautiously optimistic that the returns reflect fairly accurately the number of adult males. The names are listed separately for the two parishes, 73 for Marshchapel and 101 for Fulstow.¹²⁸ Some names do appear more than once but we know from the parish register that there were, for example, three Barnard Hags. If we allow, as Whiteman suggests, for equal numbers of men and women, then doubling the figure for adult males would provide an estimate of the total number of adults. Working on the assumption, as was indicated earlier, that approximately one third of the population was under 16 and, further, that the 16/18 difference would not be significant, a multiplier of three is applied to the numbers of adult males in each parish as indicated by the Protestation Returns. This produces an estimated population figure of 219 for Marshchapel and 303 for Fulstow. If these figures are reliable, the combined population of the two parishes had continued to decline but, in a remarkable reversal of fortunes, the population of Fulstow had overtaken that of Marshchapel.

The Compton Census 1676

Evidence from the Compton Census of 1676 is outside the period covered by this study but it is considered here to provide a comparison with earlier population estimates. For

¹²⁶ Anne Whiteman, ed., *The Compton Census of 1576: A Critical Edition*, vol. n.s.10, *Records of Social and Economic History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1986). p.lxxvii

¹²⁷ Dyer and Palliser, eds., *The Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603*. pp.lxix-lxxii.

¹²⁸ W.E. Webster, ed., *Lincolnshire Protestation Returns 1641-1642* (1984).House of Lords PO/JO/10/1/96.(1642).

this census, each parish was required to return figures for numbers of communicants and non-communicants. This information should have been relatively easy to acquire and there is every reason to assume that those responsible for the returns would have done an honest job. However, there were problems with the initial questionnaire. There was doubt about whether the count was to include householders and servants or just householders and whether women as well as men were to be counted. The latter problem should have been solved in Lincolnshire as the Bishop of Lincoln had been informed that women over 16 should be included.¹²⁹ This time the figures for Fulstow and Marshchapel were returned separately and there is no obvious sign of rounding up. In Marshchapel there were reported to be 117 communicants and 25 non-communicants whilst for Fulstow the figures were 140 and 2 respectively, indicating a total of 142 over 16 year olds for each parish. Since non-communicants are included in this case, a multiplier of 1.5 is applied giving a projected figure of 213 for each of the settlements.

Table 3.2(a) Raw population data for Marshchapel and Fulstow

Date	Source	Marshchapel	Fulstow	Total	Unit Counted
1563	Diocesan Returns	55+39	69	163	Households
1595	Haiwarde's Map	81	71	152	Homes
1603	Liber Cleri			400	Communicants
1641	Protestation Returns	73	101	174	Adult Males
1676	Compton Census	117+25	140+2	284	Communicants +Noncommunicants

Table 3.2(b) Projected population figures for Marshchapel and Fulstow

Date	Source	Multiplier	Marshchapel	Fulstow	Total
1563	Diocesan Returns	4-6	376-564	276-414	652-978
1595	Haiwarde's Map	4-6	324-486	284-426	608-912
1603	Liber Cleri	1.5-2.0		400	600-800
1641	Protestation Returns	3	219	303	522
1676	Compton Census	1.5	213	213	426

¹²⁹Whiteman, ed., *The Compton Census of 1576: A Critical Edition*. pp.xxx-xxxi

The raw figures for Fulstow and Marshchapel for 1603, 1641 and 1676 are presented with those for 1563 and 1595 in Table 3.2(a). Table 3.2(b) shows the absolute population figures extrapolated from that data. The figures suggest an initial increase in the population of Fulstow but, overall, a steady decline in the total population of the two parishes between 1563 and 1676. This is in contrast to the national pattern of demographic fluctuation which was one of growth in the century preceding 1640 followed by a phase of stagnation from 1640 to 1709.¹³⁰

Figure 3.2 Projected population figures for Marshchapel and Fulstow

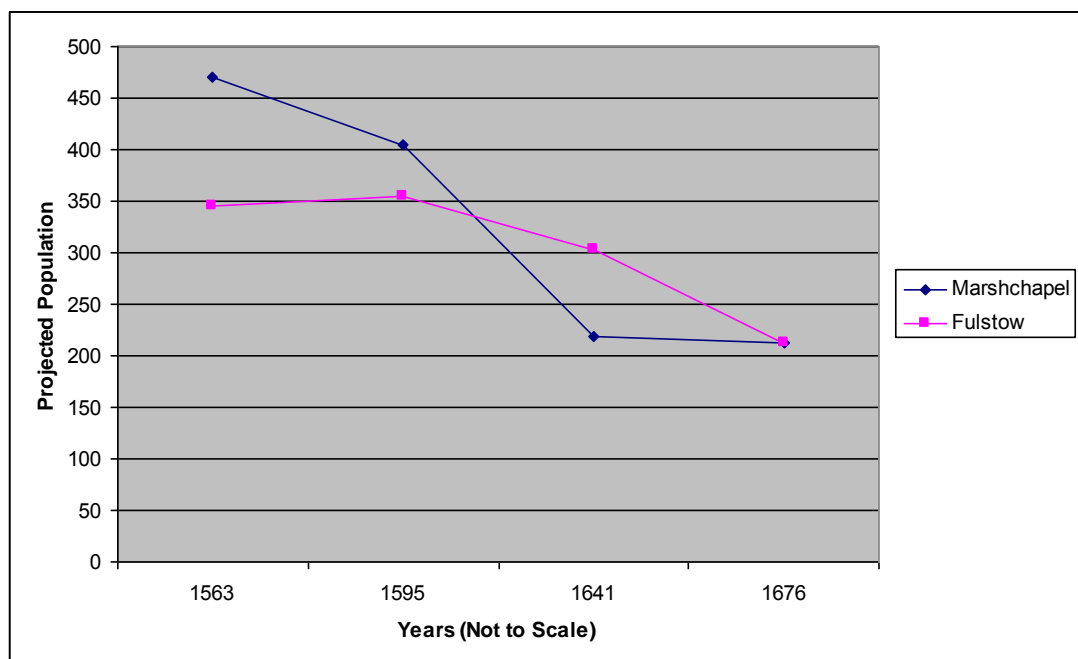


Figure 3.2 demonstrates more clearly the difference between the patterns of decline in the two parishes. For the purposes of the graph, a multiplier of five has been applied to the number of households in 1563 and the number of houses in 1595. The data for 1603 is not included as the figure for the Liber Cleri is a combined one for the two parishes. The massive loss apparently suffered by Marshchapel between 1563 and 1642 is difficult to explain, especially when compared to the figures for Fulstow. One possible explanation might be that one or more of the hamlets assigned to Marshchapel in 1563 had been included in the Fustow parish in 1642 but it might reflect a real contrast between the demographic trends of the two parishes in the seventeenth century.

¹³⁰ Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871; a reconstruction*. pp.173-174.

Table 3.2(c) Projected Population Figures

Date	Source	N. Cotes	N. Somercotes	Skidbrooke
1563	Diocesan Returns	148-222	344-516	228-342
1603	Liber Cleri	156-208	375-500 ¹³¹	225-298
1641	Protestation Returns	168	393	231
1676	Compton Census	69	329	195

Table 3.2(c) indicates that neighbouring coastal parishes also suffered decline during this period though, unlike the trend observed in Fulstow and Marshchapel, population in the three parishes seems to have stagnated in the second half of the sixteenth century before the downward turn began. North Cotes is immediately to the north of Marshchapel and North Somercotes and Skidbrook with Saltfleet are to the south. In each case, with the exception of the survey, the same sources are available, and the same calculations have been applied. Pawley found that baptisms outnumbered burials in Skidbrooke at the rate of 2.5-3 per year between 1563 and 1603, except in the crisis months, of January to February 1591 and late summer 1592. He calculated that, overall, the population would have been increasing at the rate of 1% per year at that time.¹³² Table 3.2c does not appear to substantiate his estimate of growth. The figures for North Cotes are particularly remarkable and the decline that began before 1640 seems to have continued into the eighteenth century; the 37 families in the parish in 1563 had dropped to 19 by 1723.¹³³

3.2 Contours of Death?

The period between about 1550 and 1700 has been called the ‘Little Ice Age’. The first half of the sixteenth century was unusually warm in Northern Europe but then a sharp change occurred. During the next 150 years, though there were variations within the

¹³¹ ‘State of the Church gives a figure of 24 Communicants for North Somercotes and 250 for the much smaller village of South Somercotes. The two patron saints, St Mary for North Somercotes and St Peter for South Somercotes, have sometimes been assigned incorrectly so that the two parishes may have been confused one with the other in 1603. In 1563, 86 households were returned in North Somercotes and 54 for South Somercotes. In 1681 both parishes were called ‘St Peter’s’ in the Bishop’s register.

¹³² Pawley, “Lincolnshire Coastal Villages and the Sea, c.1300-c.1600.” pp.308-310.

¹³³ Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*. p.144.

period, overall the weather was colder than it had ever been since the last Ice Age about ten thousand years ago. Between 1550 and 1650 20% of rainfall in England fell in July and August. There was a preponderance of wet summers, notably between the 1570s and the 1620s. The 1550s, the 1570s and the 1590s were particularly wet and several years of poor harvests followed one upon the other.¹³⁴ Grain prices rose steeply, especially between the 1540s and 1590s when the market value of agricultural foodstuff increased by 167%.¹³⁵ Bowden described the period between 1590 and 1630 as 'the most terrible years through which the country has ever passed'.¹³⁶ Whether people starved to death on a large scale is still a matter for debate but poor harvests and high prices must have caused hardship and undermined health, especially amongst the poor, and made them more vulnerable to disease.¹³⁷

Another characteristic of this period in Northern Europe were the great storms which led to coastal flooding, destruction of buildings, loss of life and livelihood.¹³⁸ One such storm which affected the east coast of Lincolnshire in early October 1571 was recorded in some detail by Hollingshed. But for three houses, the whole 'town' of Mumby Chappell 'was lost'. The church was 'overthrowne', only the steeple survived.

A ship was driven upon a house and three of the mariners lepte out of the shippe, and chaunced to take hold on the house-toppe, and so saved themselves... Between Boston and Newcastell were three score sea vessels, as small ships, craires, and such like, lost upon the coastes of Boston, Humberston, Marshe Chappelle, Tetney, Saltfleetby, North Cotes, Keelby and Grimsby, where no shippe can come in without a pilote, whyche were all lost, with goodes, corne and cattell with all the salte cotes, where the chiefe and finest salte was made, were utterly destroyed to the utter undoing of manye a man and great lamentation of old and yong ... Many men had great losse, as well as sheep, kine, oxen, great mares, coltes of the breede of the great horses and other cattell innumerable...¹³⁹

¹³⁴ Hubert Lamb, *Climate History and the Modern World* (London: Methuen, 1982).pp.201-230.

¹³⁵ Peter Bowden, "Agricultural Prices, Farm Profits and Rents," in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1500-1640.*, ed. Joan Thirsk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).p.605.

¹³⁶ Ibid.p.621.

¹³⁷ John Walter and Roger Schofield, "Famine, disease and crisis mortality in early modern society," in *Famine, disease and the social order in early modern society*, ed. John Walter and Roger Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1991).pp.1-73, John Walter, "The social economy of dearth in early modern England," in *Famine, diease and the social order in early modern society*, ed. John Walter and Roger Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).75-128

¹³⁸ Lamb, *Climate History and the Modern World*.pp.201-230.

¹³⁹ Pishey Thompson, *The History and Antiquities of Boston*, 1997 ed. (Sleaford: Heritage Lincolnshire, 1997).pp.68-69

Many animals were drowned at Mumby Chappell, including 1,100 sheep belonging to a Mr Pelham, 500 sheep at Somercotes 'belonging to the inhabitants there' and another 1100 between Humberston and Grimsby belonging to a Mr Spicer, whose shepherd was also drowned. Another three individuals between them lost 1,020 sheep. A Mr Maddison lost a ship. Four other individuals together lost an estimated 20,000 cattle.

It might have been expected that, given weather of such severity, the whole country would have suffered poor harvests, falling birth rates and high mortality. As we have seen, there were times when a series of poor harvest years fell one after the other but, in spite of the hardships, the population of England was growing rapidly. Why did the population of Marshchapel and neighbouring villages not conform to the same trend? Why was their experience different from the rest of the country? Were the people of the Lindsey marshland dying of hunger or disease and, if so, why were they more vulnerable than people elsewhere? Was Marshchapel an unhealthy place to live? Did migration play a part in the decline and, if so, what had happened in the economy to change the balance since the first half of the sixteenth century?

A growing number of studies have pointed to the fact that other marshland communities did not conform to the national population trend during this period. In a thesis submitted in 1966, West demonstrated that the fenland parish of Wrangle in Lincolnshire experienced a decline, with an excess of burials over baptisms in the years between 1597 and 1642. West calculated that the fertility rate was average but the mortality rate was high.¹⁴⁰ In a study of 118 parishes in east Sussex, published in 1975, Brent wrote that the marshland parishes seem to have been 'particularly conducive to high mortality'. They differed from other parishes in the study, in that burials per decade between 1611 and 1640 generally exceeded baptisms.¹⁴¹ In their major study of the population history of England between 1541 and 1871 published in 1981, Wrigley and Schofield concluded that 'there was a genuine difference between the balance struck between fertility and mortality in urban and marshland communities and that obtaining in more isolated and better drained rural parishes'. Wyberton in the Lincolnshire fens, was one of the few of the 404 parishes they studied in which burials exceeded baptisms in two

¹⁴⁰ F. West, "The Social and Economic History of the East Fen Village of Wrangle 1603-1837" (Ph.D, University of Leicester, 1966). p.38. Available at Lincolnshire Archives Office.

¹⁴¹ C.Brent, "A Devastating Epidemic in the Countryside of East Sussex between Harvest Years 1558-1640," *Local Population Studies* 14 (1975).pp.42-48.

out of every three decades.¹⁴² In 1996, Johnson published a study of the populations of six groups of Lincolnshire parishes between 1601 and 1800. The groups were chosen to represent different types of terrain within the county. He found variations of experience between parishes even in the same group but all except two of the parishes, namely the fen parishes of Fleet and Gedney not far from Wyberton, conformed largely to the national population trend. Like Marshchapel, these two parishes seem to have experienced a steady erosion of population in the seventeenth century and beyond. Johnson found that burials outnumbered baptisms for extended periods; he maintained that this was an indication that the fens were an unhealthy place to live, the 'agues', including malaria, were endemic.¹⁴³

Dobson's study of death and disease in more than 500 parishes in Kent, Essex and Sussex, published in 1997, showed that death rates in low-lying marshland parishes were high compared to those further inland and at an elevation of 400 or 500 feet. Salt marshes were particularly dangerous. She, too, believed that malaria was a significant contributory factor.¹⁴⁴ In the 24 marshland parishes in the study, burial surpluses began in the last two decades of the sixteenth century. Mortality levels reached a peak in the seventeenth century and were at their highest in the warmest decades, especially during autumn and spring. A cold, wet summer might mean a poor harvest and food shortages but it could be better for the health of the marsh people as it would inhibit the life cycle of the malaria-carrying mosquito. Malaria had arrived in England by the sixteenth century and seems to have reached its peak in the mid-seventeenth century, when it began to decline very slowly. It was still prevalent in the English marshes, including in Lincolnshire, in 1840 and the last known cases in England were in the 1920s.¹⁴⁵ This may have been the *P.vivax* form of the disease which became endemic in parts of the temperate world as it was capable of being transmitted in areas where average summer temperatures are over 16° C.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871; a reconstruction*, pp.165-166.

¹⁴³ J.A. Johnston, "Population Trends in Lincolnshire 1601-1800," *Lincolnshire History and Archaeological* 31 (1996).

¹⁴⁴ Mary J. Dobson, *Contours of Death and Disease in Early Modern England*, ed. Roger Schofield, et al., vol. 29, *Cambridge Studies in Population, Economy and Society in Past Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. pp.347-349.

¹⁴⁶ Mary Dobson, *Disease: The Extraordinary Stories Behind History's Deadliest Killers* (London: Quercus, 2007).p.87.

Malaria was not always fatal but its effect was debilitating; the recurrent ague attacks could have undermined the health of its victims and led to early death. The general state of weakness may have made them more vulnerable to other diseases. General lassitude arising from poor health would have affected their ability to earn a living and to take adequate care of diet and hygiene for themselves and their families. Alcohol and opium were commonly used to alleviate the symptoms of disease. The picture painted by Dobson of the lives of the poor affected by malaria in the marshland communities of the south east is a bleak one: insanitary hovels, stagnant pools, inadequate or impure water supplies and a diet depending largely on salt fish and flesh with little in the way of fruit or vegetables, 'a poor diet combining high levels of salt with large quantities of narcotics'.¹⁴⁷

We cannot be certain that this description could be applied to the Lindsey marshes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but Dobson implies a possible similarity between the conditions in the marshes of the south east and those pertaining in some parts of Lincolnshire. She points to the sharp drop in infant mortality in Wrangle in 1734, which West attributes to land drainage. Though West did not make the link, Dobson appears to indicate that it is a likely possibility that malaria had been present in Wrangle and that it had been a significant cause of the high rate of mortality in that parish.¹⁴⁸ If Wrangle, why not Marshchapel? Several similarities have already been observed between the demography of the two parishes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Mortality was consistently high though it rarely qualified as a crisis in the terms described by Wrigley and Schofield.¹⁴⁹

Earlier in the twentieth century, Thirsk had expressed another theory. She maintained that the Lindsey marshland had become one of the most densely settled regions of the county by the mid-sixteenth century. She believed that immigrants were attracted by the land made available through draining and diking; it was a 'movement of peasants seeking fertile land for farming, and judging by its fruits they were not disappointed'.¹⁵⁰ She recognised that by 1723 there had been a marked decline in the population of the

¹⁴⁷ Dobson, *Contours of Death and Disease in Early Modern England*. pp.287-367.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p.353,n.250. West, "The Social and Economic History of the East Fen Village of Wrangle 1603-1837".

¹⁴⁹ Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871; a reconstruction*. pp.646-649.

¹⁵⁰ Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*. pp.52-54.

coastal townships compared to 1563.¹⁵¹ Thirsk suggested that there was pressure on the rich grazing grounds of the marshland which benefited the gentry and the large farmers at the expense of the peasant.¹⁵² This may have been a contributory factor in Marshchapel and evidence to support this is explored later in this chapter and in subsequent chapters. Meanwhile, aggregation and family reconstitution of the parish register suggest other factors which may have been at play.

3.3 Dearth, disease or migration?

The two processes of aggregation and family reconstitution by which the data obtained from parish registers can be used to complement and interpret absolute population figures are fully described in *An Introduction to Historical Demography*.¹⁵³ Family reconstitution was recently acknowledged to be one of the two biggest advances in local population studies since the Second World War as it can produce detailed estimates of a wide range of measures of fertility and mortality.¹⁵⁴ Aggregation and family reconstitution have been used extensively in major studies to shed new light on past patterns of demographic behaviour and their relationship to economic and social trends.¹⁵⁵ Here they are used in a smaller way to examine the demographic trends in a single parish. Both processes have been applied to analyse the Marshchapel parish register. To provide some points of comparison and contrast, aggregative analysis has also been applied to the parish register of neighbouring Fulstow. While using parish registers in these ways, it should be remembered that some records may have been depressed as a result of nonconformity, though this is unlikely to have been a significant factor before the mid-seventeenth century.¹⁵⁶

Baptisms and Burial

Although there are some earlier entries of the Marshchapel parish register which are still legible, it is only between 1590 and 1657 that there is a sufficiently complete and

¹⁵¹ Ibid. p.142.

¹⁵² Ibid. p.147.

¹⁵³ Wrigley, ed., *An Introduction to Historical Demography from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*.

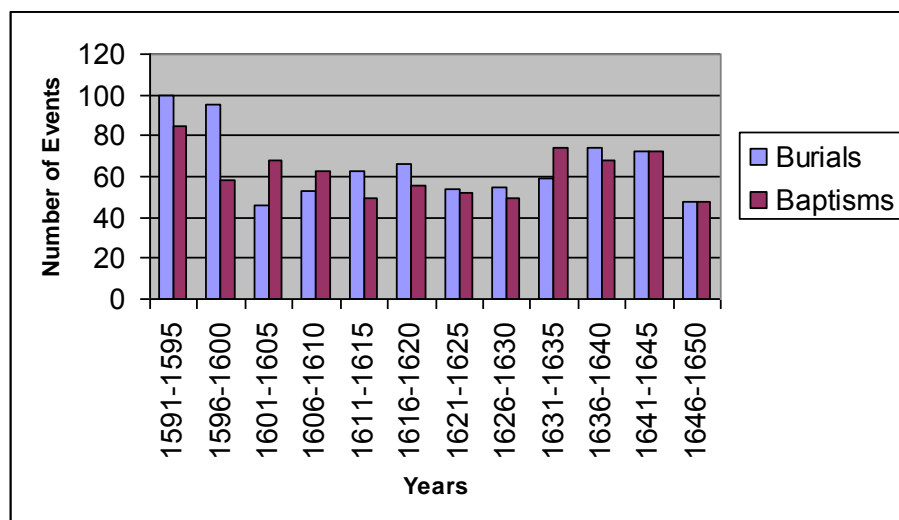
¹⁵⁴ E.A. Wrigley, "Population History: Recent Changes and Current Prospects," *Local Population Studies*, no. 81 (2008).pp.7-10.

¹⁵⁵ E.A Wrigley et al., *English Population History from Family Reconstitution 1580-1837*, 2005 ed., *Cambridge Studies in Population, Economy and Society in Past Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871; a reconstruction*.

¹⁵⁶ Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871; a reconstruction*.p.89.

consistent run to provide useful and reliable data for the purpose of this study.¹⁵⁷ As Figure 3.3 demonstrates, burials outnumbered baptisms in seven of the 12 periods of five years between 1591 and 1650. In the first 30 years there was a total of 430 burials compared with 379 baptisms and in the next thirty years 362 burials compared with 381 baptisms. Over the whole 60 year period, burials outnumbered baptisms by 32 and it is worth noticing that the number of events recorded in the five years between 1591 and 1595 was not equalled again in any of the subsequent five yearly periods to 1650. This is a pattern similar to that found in Wrangle, Wyberton, Fleet, Gedney and the other fen and marshland parishes referred to above. It seems that the worst years for Marshchapel were between 1590 and 1620, coinciding with the period described by Bowden as ‘the most terrible years through which the country has ever passed’.¹⁵⁸

Figure 3.3 Burials and baptisms in Marshchapel in five yearly intervals 1591-1650



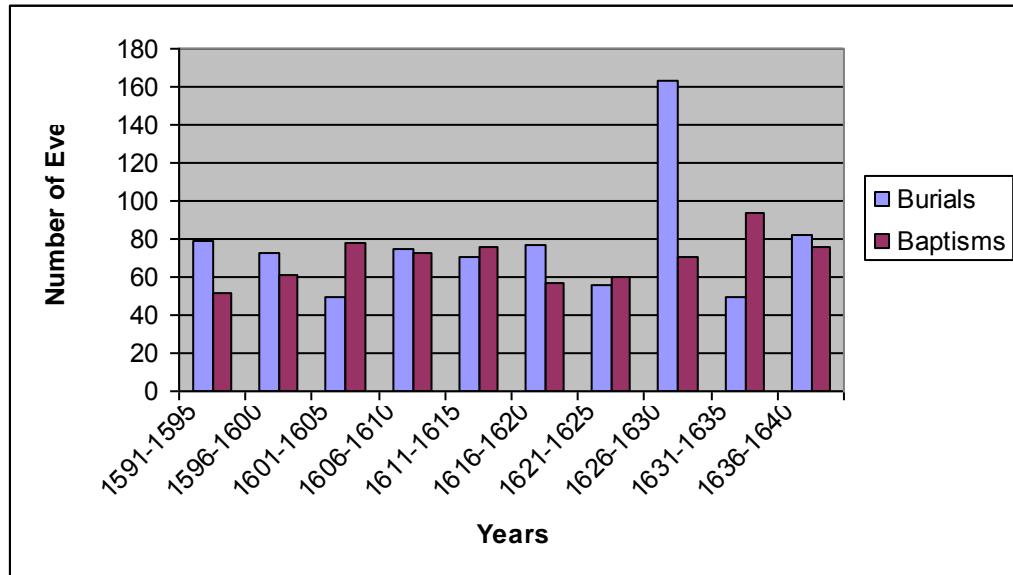
In their study of demography in 404 parishes in England between 1541 and 1871, Wrigley and Schofield identified the 1590s, 1620s and 1630s as decades when the incidence of local mortality crises were higher than usual. ‘These were decades in which the national death rate fluctuated violently upwards in one or more years, indicating that the crises in these decades were widespread and that the surges in the national death rates were not simply the product of heavy mortality in a few large parishes.’¹⁵⁹ In this microstudy it is not intended to apply Wrigley and Schofield’s formula to identify a

¹⁵⁷ LAO Marshchapel Parish 1/1.

¹⁵⁸ Bowden, "Agricultural Prices, Farm Profits and Rents." p.605.

mortality ‘crisis’ so the word is employed subjectively but with caution and only for events of exceptionally high mortality.¹⁶⁰

Figure 3.4 Burials and baptisms in Fulstow in five yearly intervals 1591-1640



As Fulstow, Marshchapel’s parent village, is further inland and, in parts, up to 10 metres above sea level, it might be expected to have had a more positive baptism burial profile. The parish register for Fulstow together with the Bishop’s transcripts appear to provide a consistent and reliable source from 1588-1651, except for the years 1645, 1646 and 1647 after the death of the incumbent and before the arrival of his replacement. Burials outnumbered baptisms in six of the 11 five yearly intervals between 1591 and 1640 (Figure 3.4).¹⁶¹ In the 30 years between 1591 and 1620 there were 397 baptisms and 418 burials. Again these decades coincide with Bowden’s ‘most terrible years’. In the following 20 years there were 301 baptisms and 351 burials. The situation appears to be worse than in Marshchapel where the number of baptisms became closer to the number of burials after 1620. However, 115 of the burials in Fulstow in the 20 years after 1620 were associated with a crisis event which occurred in 1630 and which is discussed later in this chapter. Without such an extraordinary event, the number of Fulstow baptisms between 1621 and 1640 could have outnumbered burials by approximately three to two.

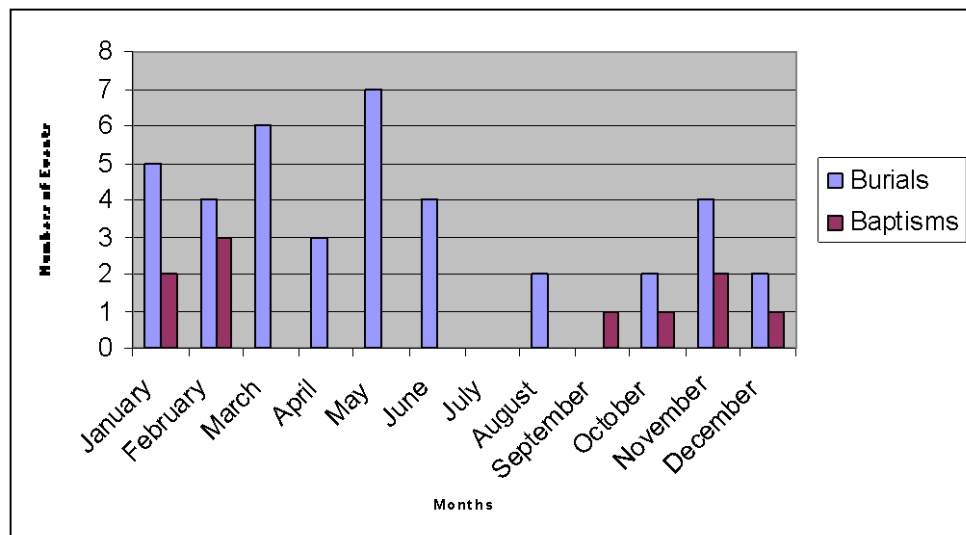
¹⁵⁹ Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871; a reconstruction*. pp.650-651.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. pp.646-649.

¹⁶¹ LAO Fulstow Parish 1/1.

The three years of highest mortality in Marshchapel were 1591 when there were 40 burials, 1600 with 29 burials and 1616 with 33 compared with an average yearly rate for the whole period of a little over thirteen. It is possible only to conjecture about the causes of these crises by taking into account factors such as the seasonality of burials, the prevalence of an epidemic locally or nationally or the likelihood of the occurrence of harvest failure at a given time. In view of the fact that the final decade of the sixteenth century appears to have been a period of crisis, it is particularly tantalising not to have earlier data for Marshchapel with which to place it in context.

Figure 3.5 Monthly baptisms and burials in Marshchapel in 1591



Though there are no reliable records for Marshchapel for the years before 1590 which can be compared with the eventful early years of the 1590s, there is evidence that there had been a catastrophic harvest and dearth in England in 1586.¹⁶² In 1587, there was a serious outbreak of plague in the nearby market town of Louth.¹⁶³ There are records for Fulstow for 1588 and 1589; in those two years, baptisms outnumbered burials by 42 to 26. This increased number of baptisms may be the classic response to a demographic crisis and suggests that Fulstow and, possibly, Marshchapel had suffered the dearth which followed the poor harvest of 1586 or the plague of 1587. The figures for Fulstow for 1588 and 1589 are in stark contrast to the figures for the following five years when burials outnumbered baptisms by a total of 94 to 50. In Marshchapel the problem

¹⁶² Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680*, *Hutchinson Social History of England* (London: Hutchinson, 1982).pp.150-156.

¹⁶³ Richard Gurnham, *A History of Louth* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2007).p.67.J.E Swaby, *History of Louth* (London: 1951).pp.103-104.

appears to have become apparent in the late autumn of 1590 and continued into the spring of 1591 when, after a summer lull, numbers of burials rose again in the winter months. The year 1591 is also remarkable for the scarcity of baptisms (Figure 3.5).

The plague is believed to have reached some parts of north east Lincolnshire, including Grimsby a few miles north of Marshchapel, at Michaelmas in 1590.¹⁶⁴ However, the seasonality of burials in Marshchapel is not consistent with the usual pattern associated with bubonic plague, which almost invariably showed a sharp rise in the number of deaths during the summer months followed by a steady decline in autumn so that deaths resulting from plague had come to an end by about the beginning of December.¹⁶⁵ The profile is more like that associated with typhus which is spread by human body lice. Outbreaks of typhus usually begin in winter when the cold discourages bathing and the changing of clothes. They tend to come to an end with the warmer weather.

Table 3.3 Adult and child burials 1588-1594 in Marshchapel and Fulstow

	1588	1589	1590	1591	1592	1593	1594
<u>Marshchapel</u>							
Children	-	-	10	12	11	3	12
Adults	-	-	11	26	7	6	12
<u>Fulstow</u>							
Children	4	7	6	7	3	10	8
Adults	6	10	7	22	15	10	7

Another distinctive feature of typhus is that, though it might cause them to sicken, children are less likely to die from it than adults.¹⁶⁶ Table 3.3 compares, where they are available, the number of child burials with those for adults for the seven years from 1588 to 1594 for Marshchapel. Burial registers do not clearly distinguish children from adults. Those described as ‘son of’ or ‘daughter of’ may include anyone up to 18 or

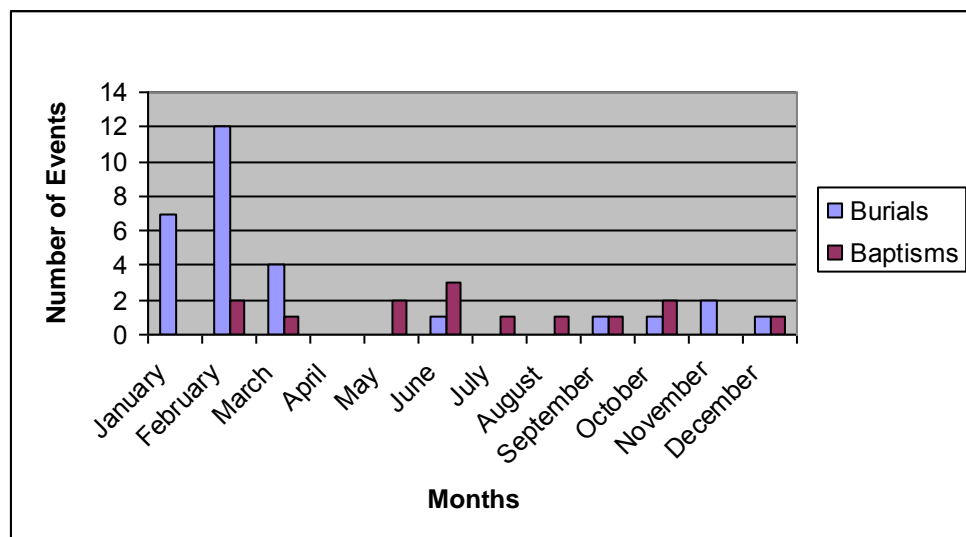
¹⁶⁴ C.W. Foster, ed., *The Parish Register of Brocklesby 1538-1837* (Privately printed for the Earl of Yarborough, 1912). pp.xiii-xxv.

¹⁶⁵ Andrew B. Appleby, *Famine in Tudor and Stuart England* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1978). p.100.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p.102.

even, perhaps, 22 if they are unmarried or living with their parents. In Table 3.3 all those so described are included in the figures for children; the number of adults, therefore, may be underestimated. The evidence indicates an increase in the number of adult deaths in 1591 in both parishes without a corresponding increase in child burials, a feature consistent with typhus. Skidbrooke seems to have experienced a similar event in the early months of 1591. Pawley suspects a viral infection such as influenza; in such a case the very old and the very young might be expected to be particularly vulnerable but this would not account for a sudden increase in adult burials compared to those of children.¹⁶⁷

Figure 3.6 Monthly baptisms and burials in Marshchapel in 1600



The pattern of baptisms and burials in Marshchapel for 1600 and 1616 are different from 1591 but similar to each other, with a heavy death toll at the beginning of the year (Figure 3.6). The turn of the century has been associated with national harvest failure.¹⁶⁸ However, the pattern is also consistent with a viral infection. There is no evidence in the parish register to suggest any particularly extreme conditions in these years. It seems that, whatever occurred in 1600, the problem was not shared in Fulstow where there were only six burials compared to 13 baptisms. In Marshchapel, the event appears to have been sufficiently serious to have wiped out at least one whole family. The wife of

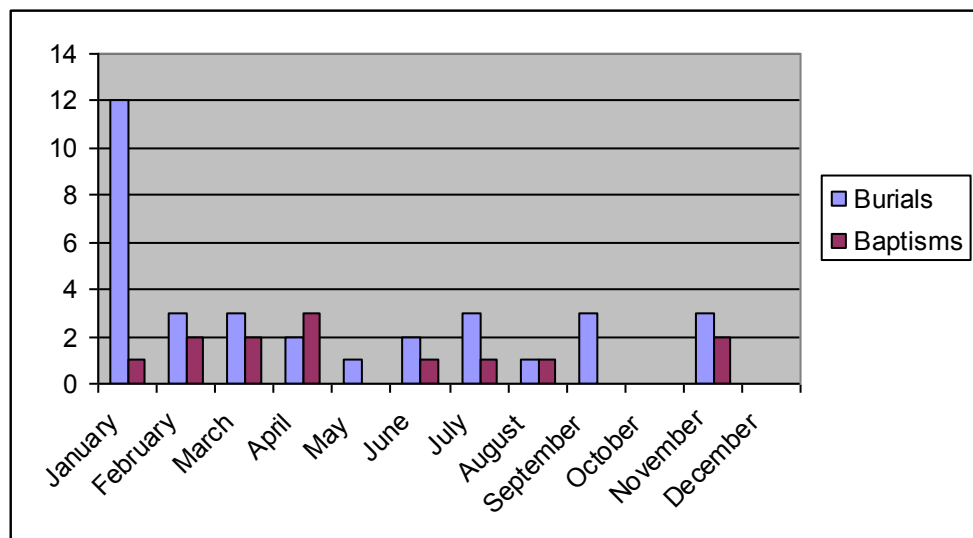
¹⁶⁷ Pawley, "Lincolnshire Coastal Villages and the Sea, c.1300-c.1600."pp.310-313.

¹⁶⁸ Margaret Spufford, *Contrasting Communities: English Villagers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Guildford: Sutton Publishing, 2000).p.50.

Robert Swabye and his three children succumbed in January 1600 and Robert died in February, a few weeks later.

The ‘great earth quake’ of Christmas Eve 1601 recorded in the Marshchapel parish register by the curate, Arthur Dawson, does not appear to have affected population figures significantly. Nor did the ‘great frost of 1608 which lasted from St Andrew’s Day (30 November) until the 23rd of February when Walter Harpham was buried’. The form of the entry suggests that the burial may have had to be delayed because the ground was too hard. In 1621 the churchwardens recorded, ‘This yeare was such a wet and cold summer that the harvest was not ripe tyll after Michaelmas (29 September) so that all the harvest of beanes and much barley was not gotten in many places tyll after Martinmas’(11 November).¹⁶⁹ Again, there was apparently no discernable effect on the number of burials.

Figure 3.7 Baptisms and burials in Marshchapel in 1616



The bad weather of 1615 seems to have been even more severe and may have had serious consequences for both Marshchapel and Fustow. ‘This year’, wrote the curate, Arthur Dawson, in the parish register, ‘was a great frost which began the latter end of January and broke up the third of March and rayseed a great floode of water because the dreanes were so hard frossen which drowned all the towne on the west side of the seadike untill the Thursday before Palm Sunday being that year the 14th April’.¹⁷⁰ We

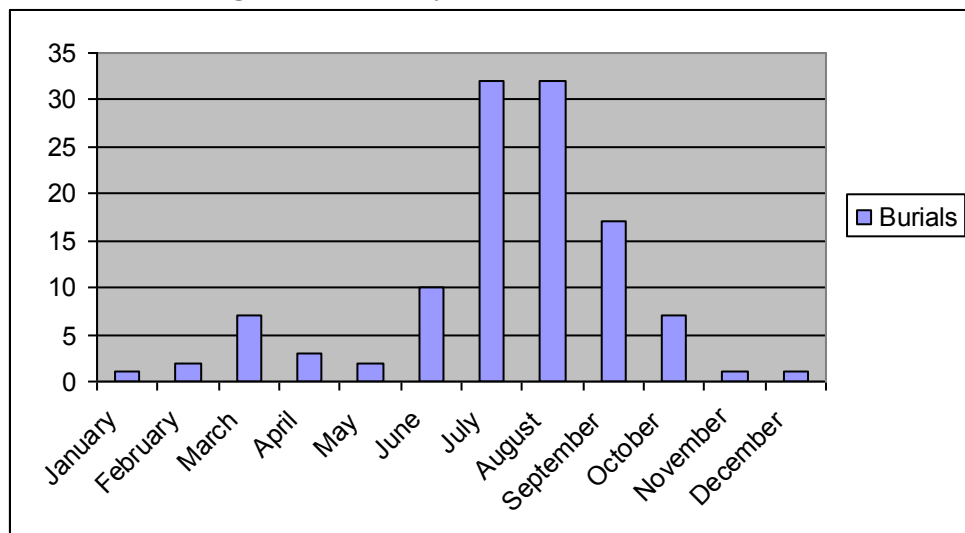
¹⁶⁹ LAO Marshchapel Par Reg 1/1.

¹⁷⁰ LAO Marshchapel Parish 1/1.

saw earlier how the Corporation of Boston had recorded great floods and devastation in the early part of 1615. Perhaps this led to food shortages and the high death toll in 1616. In that year in Marshchapel there were 33 burials, of which 12, close on the yearly average, were in January (Figure 3.7). There were 12 baptisms but no weddings. In Fulstow there were 28 burials, nine baptisms and four weddings.

There was a major difference between the overall trends of population fluctuation of Marshchapel and Fulstow in the first half of the seventeenth century. Fulstow appears to have suffered a traumatic event in 1630 when there were 115 burials, a number which must have accounted for more than one third of the total population. Theodore Squire, the vicar, had a theory which he recorded in the parish register that year: ‘The people turneth not unto him that smiteth them neither doe they seeke the Lord of Hoasts. For this cause many are weake and sicke among yow and many sleepe.’¹⁷¹ Burials peaked during the summer months, a pattern consistent with bubonic plague (Figure 3.8). Plague is recorded in the nearby market town of Louth and other parts of north east Lincolnshire that year.¹⁷² It is, perhaps, surprising that Fulstow’s close neighbour appears to have escaped so lightly. There were 21 burials in Marshchapel in 1630, a figure higher than average but not exceptional.

Figure 3.8 Monthly burials in Fulstow in 1630



Between 1591 and 1640 in Fulstow there were 753 burials compared to 697 baptisms, a

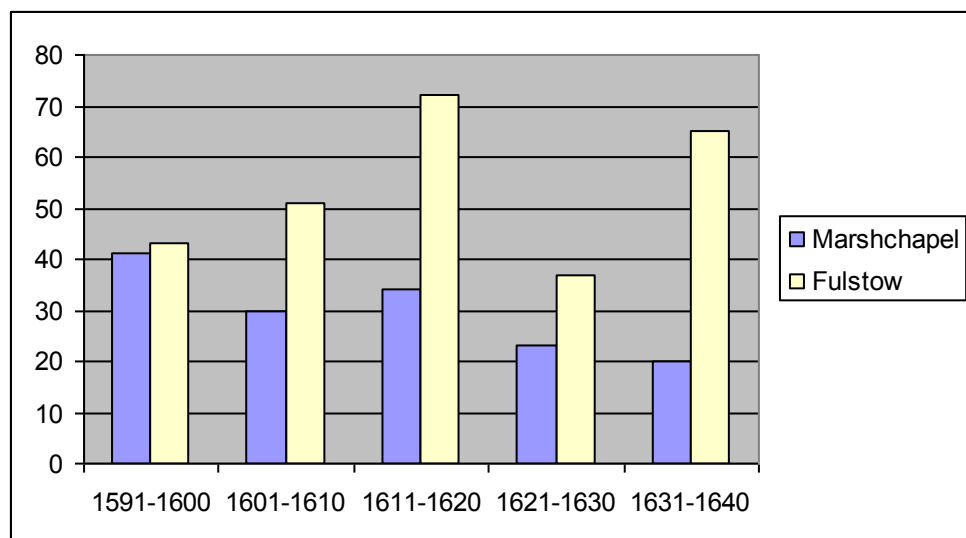
¹⁷¹ LAO Fulstow Parish 1/1.

¹⁷² Gurnham, *A History of Louth*, p.66. Swaby, *History of Louth*, p.171.

loss of 58. Without the exceptional death toll of 1630, baptisms would have outnumbered burials. The figures for Marshchapel in the same period were 665 burials and 622 baptisms, a loss of 43. In spite of its losses in 1630, Fulstow appears to have become the more populous place by 1640. In the five years following 1630 baptism outnumbered burials by 94 to 50. There was also a surge in marriages which might be expected as widows and widowers took new partners and newcomers came to fill vacant houses and enterprises. It is possible that such opportunities attracted individuals from Marshchapel who may also have been drawn by the higher, drier ground of Fulstow.

Marriage and Fertility

Figure 3.9 Numbers of marriages in Marshchapel and Fulstow between 1591 and 1640



The marriage statistics for Marshchapel and Fulstow present an intriguing puzzle: during the period of 50 years between 1590 and 1640 when there were 148 weddings in Marshchapel, there were 268, almost twice as many, in Fulstow (Figure 3.9). If this indicates that Fulstow was the church of choice, there was no sign of any change in attitude by 1640 as the numbers remained high throughout the 1630s. This is particularly curious in the light of the fate of the church not much more than a century later when the north and south aisles were removed because of the parlous state of the building and the parish.¹⁷³ An analysis of the figures for marriages in the two parishes by decade during these 50 years suggests some possible explanations. Figure 3.9 shows that in the first decade from 1591 to 1600 the numbers for the two parishes were very close, with 41 weddings in Marshchapel compared to 43 in Fulstow. A drop in numbers

¹⁷³ D.M. Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow," *Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society Reports and Papers*. (1948 -1951).p.80.

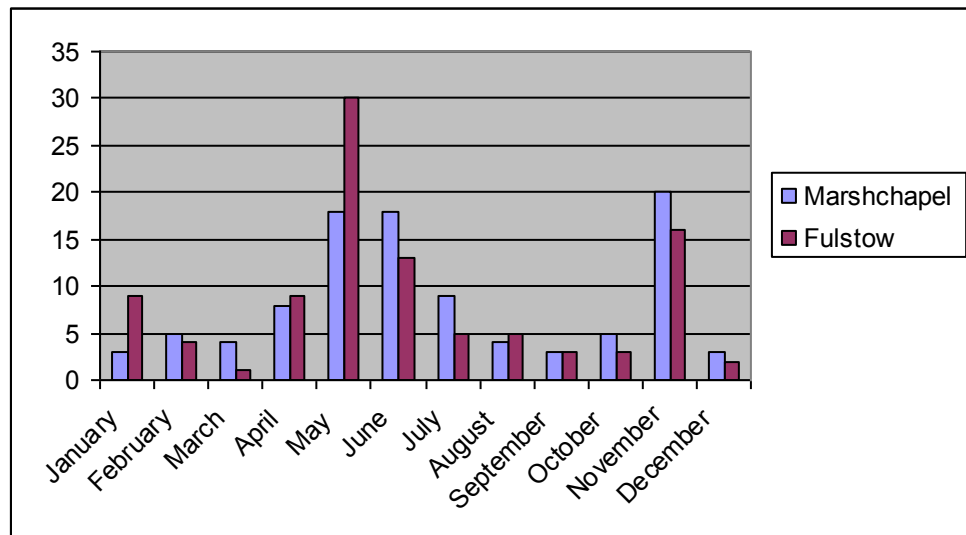
of weddings might have been expected as population declined, and this appears to be the case in Marshchapel in the next two decades, whereas in Fulstow there is a sensational increase. There is a sharp drop in both parishes in the ten years between 1621 and 1630, but, whilst figures had recovered by 1640 in Fulstow to one and a half times the number for the final decade of the sixteenth century, those in Marshchapel continued to fall to a new low of 20, less than half its total for that same decade.

A partial explanation for the increase in the number of marriages in Fulstow in the decade before 1640 must be that these were the years that followed the exceptional death toll of 1630. As was suggested earlier, there must have been widows and widowers in need of new partners and young men who were enabled to marry when a holding or other enterprise became vacant at the death of a relative or, perhaps, fatherless young women who needed economic support. No reliable figures are available for Fulstow for the next ten years but by then numbers had begun to rally in Marshchapel where 34 weddings were recorded between 1641 and 1650. Another possible explanation for a drop in the number of weddings in Marshchapel might be associated with a change of incumbents. George Clark was vicar of Fulstow until he died in 1624. He was followed in 1625 by Theodore Squire. Arthur Dawson was curate at Marshchapel until 1629 by which time he must have been an elderly man by the standards of the day, as his marriage was recorded in 1592. Perhaps he became less popular in his later years. From 1630 until 1645, Theodore Squire was signing both registers. He was followed by Michael Adlard in 1646 and William Bennet in 1647. Under-registration might have been a suspect, especially in the 1620s, when figures for both parishes were low, but in the 1630s Theodore Squire was apparently responsible for both registers and the figure for Fulstow was high. He seems to have been fairly thorough and he specifically recorded in the Marshchapel register that there were no weddings in 1633 and 1637. A third possibility is that one or more of the hamlets which had previously been assigned to Marshchapel was included in the Fulstow Protestation Returns of 1641, and that residents of such a hamlet or hamlets owed allegiance to St Lawrence's church at Fulstow.

The seasonality of marriage during these 50 years in the two parishes follows a more predictable pattern (Figure 3.10). As Kussmaul declared, 'The timing of weddings,

moulded itself to the seasonality of work and risk, which varied in their seasonality'.¹⁷⁴ She used marriage patterns to track change over time in economic activity. In rural parishes in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, there were two peaks, one in spring and early summer and another in autumn. Between 1591 and 1640 in Marshchapel nearly 36% of all marriages and in Fulstow 43% were solemnised in May and June. A peak at this time of the year, following lambing and calving, has been found to be associated with a predominantly pastoral economy. The autumn peak is less pronounced in both parishes with 20% of marriages in Marshchapel and 16% in Fulstow taking place in November, following harvest time, and thus associated with arable farming.¹⁷⁵

Figure 3.10 Seasonality of marriages in Marshchapel and Fulstow between 1591 and 1640



The summer months must have been a busy time, too, for those engaged in making salt and the pattern which suited the farming community might also have met the needs of those involved in the salt industry. In Marshchapel, the industry must have been on the verge of extinction by the 1590s when entries in the parish register have become reliable and so too late to detect any significant effect the industry may have had on marriage seasonality. But well worn habits often die hard and religious beliefs may also have influenced the shape of the graph. Before the Reformation marriages had been

¹⁷⁴ Ann Kussmaul, *A general view of the rural economy of England, 1538-1840*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.14.

¹⁷⁵ Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871; a reconstruction*. pp.298-305; Kussmaul, *A general view of the rural economy of England, 1538-1840*, Ann Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England*, ed. Robert Fogel and Stephan Thernstrom, *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Modern History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981). p.97-99; Johnston, "Population Trends in Lincolnshire 1601-1800." pp.24-25

prohibited around the three main feasts of the year, Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide. A note added in the mid-seventeenth century to the parish register of Great Cotes, a parish to the north of Marshchapel, lists the three periods of 'Times forbidden for marrying'. The first was from Advent Sunday, that is from the first Sunday of Advent which is six weeks before Christmas, until Hillary Day, which is the 13th January, two weeks after Christmas. The second period was from Septuagesima, the third Sunday before Ash Wednesday the first day of the six weeks of Lent, to the eighth day after Easter, a period of 70 days. The third prohibited time was from Rogation Sunday, that is from the fifth Sunday after Easter, until Trinity Sunday, which is the Sunday after Whit Sunday or 'Pentecost' which occurs on the seventh Sunday after Easter.¹⁷⁶ It seems that these customs were still being observed, at least in Great Cotes, 100 years after the Reformation.

The average age of first marriage and the proportions of the population who never married would significantly affect demographic trends because 'fluctuations in nuptiality produced closely similar movements in fertility'.¹⁷⁷ The mean age for first marriage between 1610 and 1650 has been calculated from family reconstitution at about 27.5 for men and 25.3 for women.¹⁷⁸ It has been possible to identify with some confidence the date of baptism of 38 individuals who were married for the first time in Marshchapel between 1608 and 1650 and, on the assumption that baptism took place shortly after birth, to work out for each an approximate age at marriage. The average age of marriage of the 15 males so identified was 26 years one month compared to 23 years one month for the 23 females. These are relatively small numbers on the basis of which to reach firm conclusion but they do suggest that there may have been a tendency in Marshchapel to marry at a relatively early age, as was the case in the fen village of Wrangle, where the average age of grooms and brides was 25.5 years and 23 years respectively.¹⁷⁹ This was very close to the age of marriage in Marshchapel but approximately two years below the national average and four years younger than the men and women of Billingborough.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ LAO Great Cotes P.R. 1/1 1653-1686.

¹⁷⁷ Wrigley et al., *English Population History from Family Reconstitution 1580-1837*.p.125.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.p.134.

¹⁷⁹ West, "The Social and Economic History of the East Fen Village of Wrangle 1603-1837". p.38.

¹⁸⁰ Johnston, "Population Trends in Lincolnshire 1601-1800." p.25.

The younger age of marriage should be associated with younger, healthier mothers, a longer span of fertility and, hence, population growth. But it was noted above that Wrangle shared with Marshchapel at this time a similar demographic pattern of stagnation and decline. Johnston suggests that the age of male marriages at Billingborough was unusually high because marriage was often delayed for men, especially eldest sons, until after the death of the father.¹⁸¹ Why this should not apply in Marshchapel or Wrangle is not immediately clear though it could be that, given their high mortality rates, fathers were dying earlier in those two villages. Alternatively, it could be that there were many landless labourers for whom there was nothing to inherit. Though Wrigley et al did not find any evidence that this was the case nationally, there may have been a tendency, also, for young women to marry earlier if their fathers died.¹⁸² When Allan Storre, yeoman, died in 1612, three of his seven children survived him. His son, William, died five years later, apparently still a bachelor.¹⁸³ Mary, was not 18 when she married John Crowston in May, 1614. Her older sister, Susan, had not turned 20, but was already married by that time.¹⁸⁴ In 1615, Susan gave birth to twins who died within days of their baptism. Infant death rate of twins and infants in all multiple births was exceptionally high.¹⁸⁵ There was a tendency among the nobility towards earlier marriage but the Storre family, though amongst the more substantial in Marshchapel, could not be counted amongst the gentry.

The age of first marriage was a significant determinant in the rate of marital fertility and, consequently, in demographic growth. However, it has been suggested that changes in the proportion of women who never married might have been even more important in altering overall fertility. It has been calculated that the figure appeared to have reached a peak of 20% amongst those reaching adult years in late Tudor and early Stuart times. Taking into account marriage age without the numbers who remained single has been described as ‘like a production of Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark’.¹⁸⁶ The number of those who never married is difficult to ascertain, especially in a mobile society. A rough indicator of the rate of marital fertility, as opposed to overall fertility, in a parish can be obtained by dividing the number of baptisms for any particular period

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Wrigley et al., *English Population History from Family Reconstitution 1580-1837*.p.171.

¹⁸³ LAO LCC Wills 1612, 315.

¹⁸⁴ LAO LCC Wills 1617 ii 248.

¹⁸⁵ Wrigley et al., *English Population History from Family Reconstitution 1580-1837*.p.218.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.p.177,pp195-195.

by the number of marriages. This method will be reliable, over a long period, only if the population is closed and stationary and if fertility, nuptiality and mortality are constant.¹⁸⁷ It can be used with more confidence over a shorter period. The results of such a calculation must always be treated with caution but more especially so in the case of the figures for Marshchapel, some of the apparent anomalies of which have already been explored. The method is employed here to enable a direct comparison with the result of a similar calculation for Fulstow. It indicated a marital fertility rate of 4.1 for Marshchapel compared to 2.59 for Fulstow. This may point to a real difference in the socioeconomic landscape of the two parishes or, perhaps, confirm that St Lawrence's was the preferred church for marriage, in which case a rate of 3.35 for the two parishes might be a more realistic figure.

Another method of calculating a marital fertility rate, described by Eversley, may also be a fairly blunt instrument but, because it employs the device of 'overlapping periods', it has the advantage that probably about 75% of the births and marriages will be related.¹⁸⁸ As an index of fertility, it is most useful in identifying long term trends. Applying the 'half over-lapping decennial' to Marshchapel would mean, for example, that the number of baptisms between 1596 and 1600 would be divided by the number of marriages between 1591 and 1595. As might be expected, the overall rate for the eleven quinquennials of marriages between 1591 and 1645 is 4.04, very close to that arrived at by the previous method. It is, perhaps, too short a period of time to attempt to identify trends with any confidence. The rates for individual quinquennials appear to be erratic, ranging from the highest at ten down to the lowest at 2.6. This may be inevitable when a relatively small number of events is involved, but it may be significant that the rate for the first six quinquennials of marriages from 1591 to 1620 is just over 3 compared to a rate of nearly 5.5 for the five subsequent quinquennials from 1621 to 1645. It was in these later years that the marriage rate had apparently fallen. Could this be further confirmation that a greater proportion of the marriages were taking place in Fulstow? By searching the Fulstow parish register to supplement information gained from reconstitution of Marshchapel families, it has been possible to identify 22 marriages solemnised in Fulstow between 1591 and 1640 of couples whose children were subsequently baptised in Marshchapel. This is not conclusive evidence of a preference

¹⁸⁷ Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871; a reconstruction*. 189-191.

¹⁸⁸ Eversley, 1966, p.75.

for solemnising marriage in Fulstow; it could reflect a customary practice for weddings to be celebrated in the home parish of the bride. There may be a similar proportion of couples who were married in Marshchapel who subsequently resided in Fulstow. Family reconstitution of Fulstow would make it possible to identify such marriages.

A third way of estimating marital fertility is through the use of information provided by family reconstitution which makes it possible to associate parents and children within an individual family. Again, it is necessary to recognise the limitations of the method, especially where relatively small numbers are involved. There are some problems, for example, where a couple appears to be childless but whose children may have been baptised elsewhere or, especially in the case of infant deaths, may not have been baptised at all. There may be a bias towards those families which are most stable in the community who might also tend to be healthier and, therefore, more fertile. Nor does it take account of the fact that about one third of marriages were remarriages.¹⁸⁹ It has been possible to identify with, some degree of confidence, the beginning and end of 46 of the 152 marriages recorded in Marshchapel between 1591 and 1640, and the children born to them who were baptised there. No baptisms were recorded for six marriages; in three of these marriages one partner had died within a year. The largest number of baptisms recorded to one couple was 12 and the overall average was just under 3.7 per marriage. Using this method, no significant difference was found between the rate for marriages solemnised between 1591 and 1620 and those taking place in the next two decades. Unlike the other methods, only those births were counted which were associated with marriages that had taken place in Marshchapel. The difference in the results may confirm the theory that some Marshchapel couples were marrying elsewhere.

A useful comparison can be made with the fertility rate per head of population of Wrangle at the same period.¹⁹⁰ Based on an average rate of 18 baptisms a year and an estimated population of 600, West calculated a fertility rate of 30 per thousand per annum. He points out that this is only a little below the average for nineteenth century Britain, during which time the population trebled. Most pre-industrial European

¹⁸⁹ Wrigley et al., *English Population History from Family Reconstitution 1580-1837*, p.177.

¹⁹⁰ West, "The Social and Economic History of the East Fen Village of Wrangle 1603-1837", p.38.

populations had birth rates in the range 28 to 40 per thousand.¹⁹¹ Assuming an estimated combined population for Marshchapel and Fulstow of between 600 and 800, the estimated range for 1603, and an average rate of baptisms for the two parishes between 1591 and 1640 of 26.38 baptisms per annum, would indicate a fertility rate of between 33 and 44 per thousand. This is a figure even more robust than that found at Wrangle and top of the range of rates for pre-industrial Europe. It seems to rule out the possibility that unusually low fertility could account for the stagnant or declining population.

Infant and maternal mortality

We have already seen that there were some exceptional years when the population of Marshchapel was devastated by disease, bad weather or poor harvests. But death must have been an ever present reality in every home. Of the 786 baptisms recorded in Marshchapel between 1591 and 1650, it has been possible to trace 159 infants who were buried within 12 months, which is equal to a rate of 202 per 1000. The available evidence indicates that baptism generally took place very soon after birth, so it would appear that more than one fifth of babies born in Marshchapel died in infancy.¹⁹² As some may have died without baptism and others may have moved from the parish within the year, this figure may underestimate the true rate of infant mortality. Over the sixty years, infant deaths in Marshchapel accounted for one fifth of the total number of burials but the proportion was greatest in some crisis years, notably in the 1630s and late 1640s when infant burials made up to one third of the total. Between 1591 and 1650, the parish register records the birth of 386 males and 400 females. It has been possible to find the burial record within 12 months for 72 of the male and 87 of the female infants. The numbers of boys and girls who apparently survived beyond the year were almost equal at 314 and 313 respectively.

The rate of infant mortality calculated for Marshchapel is higher than the average figure proposed by Laslett who believed that, generally, the number of infant deaths would be closer to 150 per thousand births.¹⁹³ More recently, the Cambridge Group, using family reconstitution, found that the average rate of infant mortality in England between 1580

¹⁹¹ Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871; a reconstruction*.p.174.

¹⁹² Ibid.p.96.

¹⁹³ Peter Laslett, *The World We have Lost, further explored*, 3 ed. (Abingdon: Routledge, 1965). p.112-123.

and 1679 was 163.9 per 1000 though in the 30 years between 1620 and 1649 it was even lower at 154.6. There was an increase after 1679 so that in the following decade the rate reached over 200 per thousand.¹⁹⁴ Dobson estimated that, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, one in every three or four of all babies born in the coastal marshes of south east England would die before its first birthday while in the more healthy upland areas nine out of ten new-borns might survive beyond their first year.¹⁹⁵

Mothers were also vulnerable in child birth; Cressy quotes Schofield's calculation that the best estimates indicate that maternal mortality rate was just less than 10 per 1000 in the late sixteenth century and a little higher in the first half of the seventeenth century. He concludes that, given that on average a woman might expect six or seven pregnancies, she would have a 6% or 7% chance of dying in child birth during her procreative career which was no greater than the risk she ran each year from dying of other causes. Nonetheless, the risk was doubled during that period of her life.¹⁹⁶ More recent research by the Cambridge Group indicates higher rates for the years between 1580 and 1649. Between 1580 and 1599 the rate of maternal deaths per 1000 birth events was found to be 12.3; it subsequently rose to 12.8 between 1600 and 1624 and to 14 in the following 25 years. The fact that women were expected to have a winding sheet prepared before their first confinement illustrates the stark reality.¹⁹⁷

Parental mortality and family structure

The custom of remarrying within a few months of the death of a spouse might be alien to modern sensibilities but in early modern times it was an essential strategy for survival. Fathers needed a woman to take care of the children and to manage the household and mothers needed economic support. The process of family reconstitution revealed how the high level of parental mortality and subsequent remarriage resulted in some complex family structures. The Atkins are just one of the scores of families which could have been chosen to illustrate this feature of Marshchapel society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. John Atkin, carpenter, and his wife, Ann, appear to be newcomers to the village when their presence is recorded in Marshchapel parish register

¹⁹⁴ Wrigley et al., *English Population History from Family Reconstitution 1580-1837*.p.218.

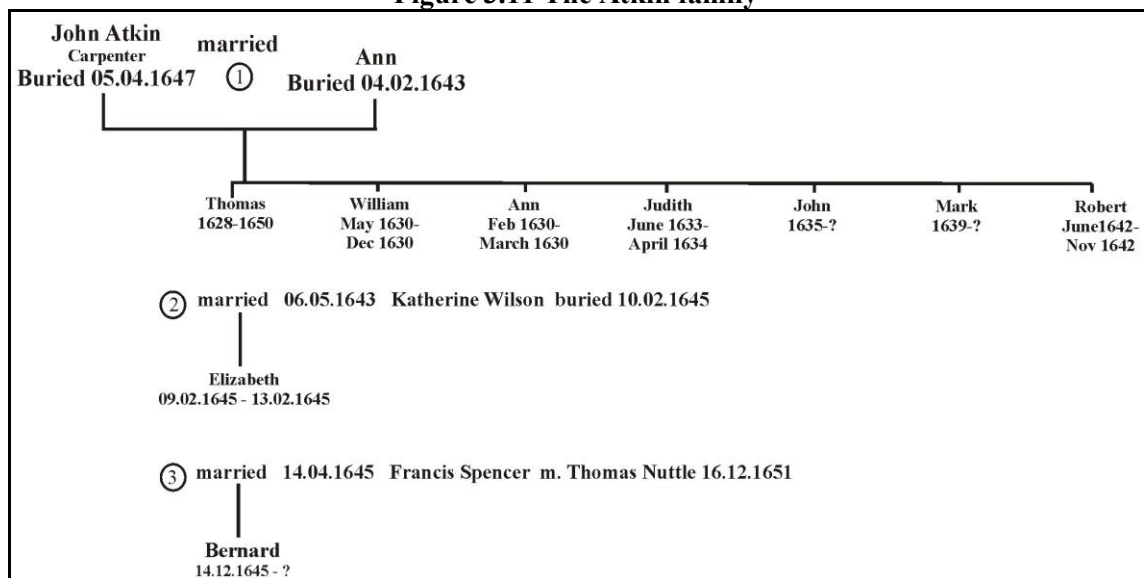
¹⁹⁵ Dobson, *Contours of Death and Disease in Early Modern England*.pp.2-3.

¹⁹⁶ David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). pp.30-31.

¹⁹⁷ Dr. Amanda Capern, University of Hull. Personal communication. Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England 1550 -1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003).p.152.

at the baptism of their child in 1628. Six more Atkin children were baptised there during the next six years, four of whom died in infancy. Ann died in February 1643, only a few months after the birth and death of the youngest, leaving Thomas aged 15, John aged eight and Mark aged four. Their father remarried in Marshchapel less than three months after Anne's burial. His second wife, Katherine Wilson, gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth, and died on the 10th February 1645. Elizabeth was baptised and buried three days later. On the 14th of April, a little over two months after the death of his second wife, John married Frances Spenser. On the 14th of December the same year, just eight months later, their son Bernard was baptised. Bernard was only 16 months old when his father died leaving his widow, Frances, also with Thomas, John and Mark, the three sons of his first marriage, now nineteen, twelve and eight years old respectively. Thomas died three years later at the age of 22. Francis Atkin, widow, married Thomas Nuttle in December 1651. The Atkin family disappears from the Marshchapel register.

Figure 3.11 The Atkin family



Mobility

The experience of the Atkin family illustrates one of the reasons why many family surnames do not persist in the parish register for more than a generation. There were 21 events relating to the Atkins recorded in the register. They were not apparently an itinerant family, they did not lack fertility. It was high mortality amongst both children and adults which led to the disappearance of the family name within 23 years of their arrival in the parish. It is not only death that led to the steady turn over of family names in Marshchapel; there was also to be a high level of mobility. It has been suggested that

the effect of migration on variation in demographic trends has been underestimated. Migration, says Richard Smith, has been too long a Cinderella and is 'deserving of pole position in the interests of generations of local historians who wish to make microcosmic contributions to their subject'.¹⁹⁸ What follows may not do justice to Smith's rallying cry as it fails to quantify the impact in absolute terms, but it is an attempt to give a sense of the extent of the mobility that was a feature of this marshland population in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Of the 258 surnames recorded in the Marshchapel register between 1591 and 1650, just over one third appeared only once and a further 22 appeared only twice. Only 11% of surnames lasted from 1590 into the 1640s. Of the 90 surnames that appeared only once in the register, 30 were associated with burials, 11 with baptisms and 48 with marriages. It is hardly surprising that new names appeared in the marriage register as young people found partners outside the parish. In four of the marriages both bride and groom had surnames which appeared only once. One of those brides was Elizabeth Phillips who was the grand daughter of Walter Harpham and the daughter of Thomas Phillips of Fulstow, so she was not really an incomer. Another was Elizabeth Marshall who married John Joyse, gent. She was the widowed daughter of Thomas Grant of Marshchapel and grand daughter of Arthur Wasingley, both of whom in their life time had been men of substance in Marshchapel. In another case it was recorded that the groom was from Saltfleetby and the bride from Theddlethorpe, two villages a few miles to the south of Marshchapel. Though there may have been others who were widows and, therefore, not recognisable as local women, there were only 17 of the 48 brides who were clearly marrying in their home parishes. Of these many belonged to established families such as the Nevells and the Dawsons, families whose names appear frequently in the register.

Amongst the 30 burials of those whose surnames appeared only once there must have been other widows who, like Elizabeth Marshall, had returned to their home parish after the death of their husbands or, alternatively, had found work there as servants. Others were unmarried servants in their teens or early twenties, like Judith Butler, servant, daughter of Martin Butler of Utterby, buried in March 1635; George Stones, servant to

¹⁹⁸ Richard Smith, "Linking the local in the general in population history: prioritising migration," *Local Population Studies* 81 (2008).

Amon Hewson, who was buried in August 1633, Alice Walkerley, servant, buried in October 1610 and Judith Wickam, a maid, buried in February 1616. Evidence of the presence of such servants can also be found amongst the 11 baptisms, for example, in September 1620 when Thomas the bastard of Elizabeth Martin, servant to William Milles, was baptised. Incidentally, William, a husbandman, was between marriages at this point. Was his naming in the parish register in this connection significant?

No itinerants have been identified amongst those whose marriages are recorded but there is evidence in the lists of baptisms and burials. Margery Penystone, who was buried in February 1617, was described as a traveller, a poor woman of Thorganby, and Mabel Staniforth, who was buried in April 1597, was described as a ‘gangerell’, a beggar. John son of John Turkington, a traveller, was baptised in January 1636 and Elizabeth, daughter of a poor traveller, was buried in February 1616. Others were neither servants nor impoverished beggars. William Paddyson, miller, was buried in September 1629 and William Todd, webster, baptised his son, William, in April 1610. Were these travelling craftsmen or, perhaps, simply visitors to the parish?

Of the 22 family names that appeared only twice, one was a record of two births in the same family, another the birth and death of twins, and seven recorded the death of husband and wife. The remaining thirteen cases involved at least one wedding. Two of the thirteen recorded a marriage and another seemingly unconnected event; another three recorded two marriages which were decades apart and may have been unconnected; in one case a marriage was followed very shortly by the death of the husband; in another two a marriage was followed by a birth. The final five instances are interesting as they seem to support the notion that young unmarried incomers often came into the parish with another family member. There were three examples of siblings, in two cases both siblings married locally and, in the third, one sister married and the other died ‘a spinster’ a few years later. Theodore Squires may have been accompanied by his sister when he arrived to take up his post as vicar in Fulstow and Marshchapel. Alice Squires married John Jeckell in 1629 and Theodore’s daughter was baptised in 1631. Ann Ormsby may have brought her mother with her when she married Bernard Hagg in 1643 for Ann Ormsby, gentlewoman, was buried five years later.

Of the remaining 148 names, all of which appeared three times or more, only 29 persist from the 1590s to the 1640s. This figure includes some names of families, with a small number of unconnected events sometimes separated by decades, and who appear not to have been established in Marshchapel. On the other hand, it excludes some families, like the Harphams, who had been established for some decades previously but whose family names disappeared before the mid-seventeenth century. More will be learnt in the following chapters of other families whose names disappeared from the parish register in the first half of the seventeenth century such as the Cowpers, the Marfleets and the Bracebriggs who, like the Harphams, had had settlement in Marshchapel over a number of years and who had vested interests in the parish.

Immigration

In an attempt to quantify the level of immigration into Marshchapel, evidence from the Protestations Returns for 1642 has been combined with information gained from family reconstitution to determine how many of the adult males in the parish in 1642 could be described as ‘stayers’ and how many might be said to be incomers.¹⁹⁹ The criteria applied are necessarily somewhat subjective. An individual was identified as a ‘stayer’ if he belonged to a family in which there had been two or more generations in the parish register or if there were probate or other documents to associate the family with the parish over a longer period. Of the 70 adult males named in the returns, only 14 were confidently identified as ‘stayers’ and they shared between them only eight surnames. Another 21 were not placed in either category because the evidence was inconclusive. Thirty five of the adult males, half of those present in 1642, were identified as ‘incomers’. The ‘incomers’ included one gentleman, four yeomen, five websters, one ropemaker, one shoemaker and four labourers. It has not been possible to identify the status of the remaining nineteen. For two of them there was no entry in the parish register and another was named only in connection with the death of his wife. It seems likely that most of them were labourers or servants.

There were, then, some men of substance or, at least, of the ‘middling sort’ moving into the parish. There are only five entries in Marshchapel parish register for the family of William Cracroft, gent, before 1650, all between 1637 and 1642. These record the baptism of three of his children and the burial of two, one of whom must have been

¹⁹⁹ Webster, ed., *Lincolnshire Protestation Returns 1641-1642*.

baptised elsewhere. So far it has not been possible to establish whether he married or bought into the parish. The same may be said of the yeomen, William Bennet, Mark Pilkington and William Riggall. John Jeckell, yeoman, also may have bought into the parish; he married the sister of the vicar, Theodore Squires, who is unlikely to have brought any land to the union. These new men may have replaced the old oligarchy or their presence may provide evidence to support Thirsk's theory that larger farmers were acquiring the rich grazing grounds of the marshes at the expense of the peasants.²⁰⁰

Commenting on the effect of high mortality and immigration in the marshes of south eastern England, Dobson observed '...the marshland populations, by virtue of their unhealthiness and malarial fevers, were clearly peculiar in terms of their social structure and their demographic characteristics, and this in turn might have exacerbated the syndrome of ill health and high mortality'. Wealthier landowners chose to live above the contours of death though some of the middling sort managed to endure the hazards of a marshy environment. It was those of 'an ill habit of body and mind' and immigrants who were used to 'healthy air' who were most vulnerable. The latter, lacking immunity, either died or 'underwent a terrible seasoning' which left them debilitated.²⁰¹

We have already seen examples of illness and early death but it is not so easy to identify with any certainty those of 'an ill habit of mind' or those immigrants who were used to healthy air who succumbed to 'the hazards of the marsh environment'. Perhaps the Mawer family would qualify on both counts. Danyell Mawer married Susan Birkett at Fulstow in 1626. They had four children between 1628 and 1637, one died in 1632 and another in 1650. Susan produced an illegitimate child in 1645 and she herself died in 1650. What became of the remaining three children and where was Danyell? Or, perhaps the Fosters would fit the bill. Four children were born to Robert Foster, labourer, and his wife between 1590 and 1599 and by November 1599 three of his children, including a 'bastard' had died. Robert died in November 1601 and his wife remarried in June the following year. Perhaps Edward Foster, also a labourer, was his brother. Edward married Margaret Tympson in 1590. They had a daughter, Isabell, in 1593. Isabell was an orphan by 1597 when she was only four years old. She died in

²⁰⁰ Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*.

²⁰¹ Dobson, *Contours of Death and Disease in Early Modern England*. pp.339-340.

1610 at the age of 17, ‘a poor wench’. These are just a few examples of the transience of life for many of the marsh dwellers.

3.4 Summary

In spite of the many reservations and qualifications regarding the methods employed in the attempt to understand the dynamics of population trends in Marshchapel in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, a coherent picture has emerged. Marshchapel shared with some other marshland communities a balance of fertility and mortality which differed from that of better drained rural parishes. Wrigley and Schofield found that the period before 1640 was characterised nationally by substantial surpluses of births over deaths but, with urban parishes, marshland parishes were more likely than others to have burial deficits.²⁰² In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the population of Marshchapel declined in spite of early marriage and an above average fertility rate. It appears that malaria may have been endemic in Marshchapel and that it was a major cause of the high level of mortality, which was exacerbated by the harsh environment and the severe weather. Poverty and general ill health amongst a large section of the community made them especially vulnerable to epidemics and other diseases.

It might be expected that high levels of mortality and immigration would affect the social structure. The marshland may have attracted people whose life style made them more vulnerable to ill health and disease, while those who could afford would move to live in a healthier environment. However, we found that some of ‘the better sort’ were moving into Marshchapel, perhaps, in search of the rich grazing ground for the sheep which could bring them good profits, apparently regardless of the hazard to health. The changing socioeconomic structure of the parish is explored in some detail in the next two chapters. In Chapter Four the 1595 survey is analysed to identify the chief landholders in Marshchapel at the end of the sixteenth century. Chapter Five is concerned with identifying those who were inhabitants of the parish in 1595 but whose names do not appear in the survey. In both chapters, evidence from family reconstruction and probate documents provides more detail about the life experiences of some of these inhabitants of Marshchapel in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

²⁰² Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871; a reconstruction*. pp.165-166,176.

Further evidence of change in the socioeconomic structure of the parish is explored and evaluated.

Freeholders and Tenants

The concern of this chapter is to begin to explore the nature of the society of one marshland parish and to identify some of the factors which may have contributed to its development. Since the publication of Joan Thirsk's study of the four farming regions of Lincolnshire, much has been written about how geographical situation, demographic change and political and economic factors interacted in different ways to influence the changing social structure in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²⁰³ The 1595 survey of Fulstow and Marshchapel, though inevitably a snapshot of landholding patterns, is rich in detail and serves as a baseline position against which to measure change. In this chapter, the evidence provided by the map and the field books helps to establish the social and economic framework of the parish of Marshchapel at the end of the sixteenth century. Further detail is provided by family reconstitution of the parish register and analysis of probate documents. Before approaching the documentary evidence, it is necessary to establish what Keith Wrightson called the 'degrees of people', that is the social hierarchy as it was experienced and understood by English people in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.²⁰⁴

4.1 The Social Hierarchy

Although the structure of English society changed during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and varied from place to place, the social hierarchy of titles remained constant. At the pinnacle of English society were the gentlemen who, with their families, constituted about 2% of the population of England as a whole, though they were not evenly spread throughout the country.²⁰⁵ It has been estimated that in Lincolnshire at the beginning of Tudor rule there were about 150 wealthy families making up only 1.4% of

²⁰³ Mark Bailey, *A Marginal Economy? East Anglian Breckland in the later Middle Ages*, ed. J.C. Holt, vol. 12, *Cambridge studies in medieval life and thought. Fourth series* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Peter Fleet, "The Isle of Axholme, 1540-1640. Economy and Society" (PhD, University of Nottingham, 2002), Joan Thirsk, *Agricultural Regions and Agrarian History 1500 to 1750*, ed. L.A. Clarkson, *Studies in Economic and Social History* (Macmillan, 1987), Stephen Rippon, *The Transformation of the Coastal Wetlands: Exploitation and Management of Marshland Landscapes in North West Europe during the Roman and Medieval Periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The British Academy, 2000), Margaret Spufford, *Contrasting Communities: English Villagers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Guildford: Sutton Publishing, 2000), Joan Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Methuen, 1957), Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village; Terling, 1525-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

²⁰⁴ Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680*, *Hutchinson Social History of England* (London: Hutchinson, 1982). pp.25-46.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p.32.

the population but the number increased after the Dissolution.²⁰⁶ ‘Gentility was based on landed wealth, a wealth conspicuously displayed in the superior houses, diet and clothing of gentlemen, in the leisure they enjoyed, in the number of servants they employed and in the memorials they erected to perpetuate their memory after death’.²⁰⁷ Those who could be recognised as lesser gentry would have estates of between 50 and 1,000 acres, the middling gentry would hold between 1,000 and 5,000 acres and the upper gentry between about 5,000 and 20,000 acres. The life style that a gentleman could afford would make his status recognisable locally and would lead to selection for office. ‘Lesser gentlemen exercised considerable influence and authority in their communities. But the true test of status was the selection for county offices’.²⁰⁸

Yeomen were next in the social hierarchy of rural society. They have traditionally been defined as 40s. freeholders, that is, they possessed land in freehold worth 40s. per year. As such, they would have been able to vote in parliamentary elections. In practice, however, it was not so much the form of holding which mattered but the size. Yeomen would usually hold more than 50 acres whether it be freehold, copyhold or leasehold. Yeomen were farmers and were, therefore, ‘husbandmen’ but that term had come to be reserved for a smaller farmer, one with a holding of more than five and less than 50 acres. The wealthier husbandman could overlap with the smaller yeomen.²⁰⁹ Bowden calculated that a husbandman with 30 acres in the early seventeenth century could hope for a profit of £14 or £15 in a year of moderate harvest. This would be approximately equal to average earnings of between £28,280 and £30,300 in 2008. After providing for himself and his family at subsistence level, he might be left with, perhaps, £3 to £5 (the equivalent of between £6,060 and £10,100 in average earnings in 2008) to raise their standard of living.²¹⁰ This small margin could disappear in times of harvest failure.²¹¹

The smaller husbandman sometimes had to undertake wage labour and might overlap in terms of wealth with the more fortunate of the cottagers and labourers. Some cottagers and labourers had a few acres of land or customary rights of common though it has been

²⁰⁶ G.A.J. Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*, ed. Joan Thirsk, vol. VI, *History of Lincolnshire* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 1975).pp.8,63.

²⁰⁷ Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680*.p.33.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*.p.34.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*.pp.39-42.

²¹⁰ See Appendix III

²¹¹ Peter Bowden, "Agricultural Prices, Farm Profits and Rents," in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1500-1640.*, ed. Joan Thirsk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).p.657.

estimated that, over the whole country, two thirds of labourers had only their cottages and garden plots.²¹² Bowden calculated that, while £11.5s. a year would be needed to feed a family at subsistence level in times of average harvest, the average labourer's wage in the early seventeenth century could have been no more than £10.8s.²¹³ In the Tudor and early Stuart period, cottagers and labourers probably formed about one quarter to one third of the rural population.²¹⁴ Most rural craftsmen and tradesmen were also farmers. In general, those whose skills were more highly rated and who, therefore, were more highly paid for their services, could be comparable with the lesser yeomen or the husbandman whilst others may have had the status of labourers. Their position in the hierarchy would depend on their wealth which, in rural areas, would usually be related to the size of their land holding.²¹⁵ They may have inherited their land or increased it from the profits of their craft or trade.

Joan Thirsk identified four types of husbandry she associated with four different types of landscape, namely, the marshland, the limestone cliffs, the fens and the clay vales. She maintained that distinctive patterns of social structure appeared to be linked with each of the types of landscape and proposed that a similar pattern would apply throughout the country. She used a sample of inventories to compare the wealth of farmers in four farming regions of Lincolnshire in the decade between 1530 and 1540 and then between 1590 and 1600. It is a relatively small number of inventories on which to base a comparative study of social structure, nor is it clear how the samples were selected or even if inventories from Marshchapel were included in those representing the marshland. However, Thirsk concluded that marshland farmers were on average more wealthy than the farmers of the claylands, the fenlands and the wolds and heathlands but, while the poor were not so poor in the marshland as elsewhere in Lincolnshire neither were the rich so rich.²¹⁶ A similar analysis of the available Marshchapel inventories does not confirm that conclusion.

²¹² Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680*.pp.41-43.

²¹³ Bowden, "Agricultural Prices, Farm Profits and Rents."p.657.

²¹⁴ Alan Everitt, "Farm Labourers," in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1500-1640*, ed. Joan Thirsk (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1967).p.399

²¹⁵ Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680*.p.43.

²¹⁶ Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*. pp. 54-57.

Although issues around the usefulness and reliability of probate inventories as an historical source were explored in general terms in Chapter One, it is worth restating some of them here. Firstly, not everyone left an inventory and, in particular, women and the poor are underrepresented. Secondly, as real estate is not listed, the total value of the goods as calculated by those who drew up the inventories does not always reflect the true wealth of the deceased. Whilst bearing in mind those limitations, probate inventories can be useful for comparative purposes. Unfortunately, there are too few surviving inventories for Marshchapel for the years between 1530 and 1540 to provide a basis for comparison with those of Joan Thirsk or to compare with later figures for Marshchapel. In Table 4.1 the figures from the 20 surviving inventories for Marshchapel for 1590 to 1600 are compared with those used by Joan Thirsk for the same decade in her four farming regions.

Table 4.1 Comparison of the personal wealth of Marshchapel farmers with those calculated by Thirsk for four regions of Lincolnshire 1590-1600.²¹⁷

Value of Inventories	Number of Inventories 1590-1600				
	Marshchapel	Marshland	Clayland	Wolds & Heath	Fen
Below £10	3 = 15%	2 = 6.9%	2 = 9.1%	8 = 14.5%	7 = 9.3%
£10-£20	4 = 20%	4 = 13.8%	4 = 18.2%	6 = 10.9%	11 = 14.7%
£20-£30	3 = 15%	3 = 10.3%	3 = 13.6%	6 = 10.9%	6 = 8.0%
£30-£40	1 = 5%	1 = 3.4%	4 = 18.2%	5 = 9.1%	11 = 14.7%
£40-£50	0 = 0%	2 = 6.9%	4 = 18.2%	3 = 5.4%	7 = 9.3%
£50-£60	0 = 0%	2 = 6.9%	0 = 0%	3 = 5.4%	3 = 4.0%
£60-£80	2 = 10%	4 = 13.8%	1 = 4.5%	3 = 5.4%	11 = 14.7%
£80-£100	2 = 10%	4 = 13.8%	0 = 0%	4 = 7.3%	15 = 20.0%
Over £100	5 = 25%	7 = 24.1%	4 = 18.2%	17 = 30.9%	4 = 5.3%

The evidence that Marshchapel matched the profile of the social structure of the marshland as described by Thirsk is far from conclusive. Fifty per cent of Marshchapel inventories were valued at less than £30 in that decade, with only 25% per cent in the middle range between £30 and £100 and 25% valued at more than £100. The median value is lower than for any of Thirsk's four regions but the percentage of inventories valued at more than £100 is higher than both the claylands and the fens. The figures do appear to confirm observations made by Thirsk ten years later, when she claimed that

²¹⁷ Ibid.p.56.

the social structure of the marshland was different from that of the fenland. The fenland 'did not attract gentlemen: the social pyramid sloped gently down to the poorest, landless commoner' whereas 'some of the marshland farmers were extremely rich'.²¹⁸

Table 4.2 shows the range of values and the average value of all those probate inventories for each of the social groups where status could be ascertained. There may be some distortion as status was rarely included before 1600. It should also be remembered that, as the figures represent the years between 1540 and 1650 which was a period of high inflation, the overlap between the various social groups is exaggerated. For the same reason, the table does not fully reflect the high valuations of some of the inventories of Marshchapel yeomen, many of which in the latter part of the period were well over the average of £239.

Table 4.2 Range of values and average values of Marshchapel inventories before 1651 according to status group.

Status Group	Numbers of Inventories	Value Range	Average Value
Gentlemen	1	£1,411	£1,411
Yeomen	15	£80 - £440	£239
Husbandmen	15	£19 - £130	£58
Salt Workers	8	£8 - £33	£23
Other Trades/Crafts	12	£6 - £47	£19
Labourers	14	£2 - £42	£12

Only Walter Harpham was described as 'gent'; his goods were valued in 1607 at an exceptional £1,411, almost four times that of any other individual, so inflating the figure for that group.²¹⁹ Judging from the contents of his will it seems likely that, had he survived into the next century, Arthur Washinglay, who died in 1585, would have described himself as a gentleman but his probate inventory is not available.²²⁰ There were 15 yeomen, the value of whose goods ranged from £80 to £440 with an average of £239. The only one valued at below £100 was that of John Nevell who was self styled

²¹⁸ Joan Thirsk, ed., *The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1500 to 1640*, vol. IV, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).pp.36,39.

²¹⁹ LAO Inv 102/252.

²²⁰ LAO LCC Wills 1585 ii, 89.

‘yeoman’ in his will though described as ‘husbandman’ by his neighbours.²²¹ Of the remainder, two were over £400, another three were more than £300 and further two were over £200. These were acknowledged by the late Dr Jim Johnston to be unusually high valuations for this period.²²² There was some overlap between this group and the husbandmen for whom values ranged from £19 to £130 with an average of £58. For the purposes of comparison in Chapter Six, those who have been identified as salters or salt wellers have been listed separately from those involved in other crafts or trades but it can be seen that the values are similar. There were only eight of these, six salters and two salt wellers, with values ranging from £8 to £33 and an average of £23. The values of the inventories of those 12 other trades or craftsmen ranged from £6 to £47, the average being £19. Like the tradesmen’s inventories, the values of those of the labourers overlapped with those of the husbandmen. Fourteen men were described as labourers, the values of their inventories ranging from less than £2 to more than £42 with an average of £12.

Position in the social hierarchy was largely determined by wealth and, in a rural parish, that depended upon the extent of an individual’s land holding. Analysis of the survey of 1595 makes it possible to identify the freeholders and also those who held land as tenants of the two lords of the manor in Fulstow and Marshchapel towards the end of the sixteenth century. Other available documents, including the parish register, wills and probate inventories, are used to explore in more detail the economic and social status of individuals identified in this way. Clearly, those whose names appear in the survey are among the more prosperous and, as such, are not representative of the parish as a whole. Tenants and subtenants of landholders other than those of the two lords of the manor are not named in the field books but there are occasional clues in other documents which add pieces to the jigsaw. Finally, to begin to place the land holders within the context of the wider community, the number of families in Marshchapel in 1595 who were not represented in the survey is calculated.

4.2 The Freeholders

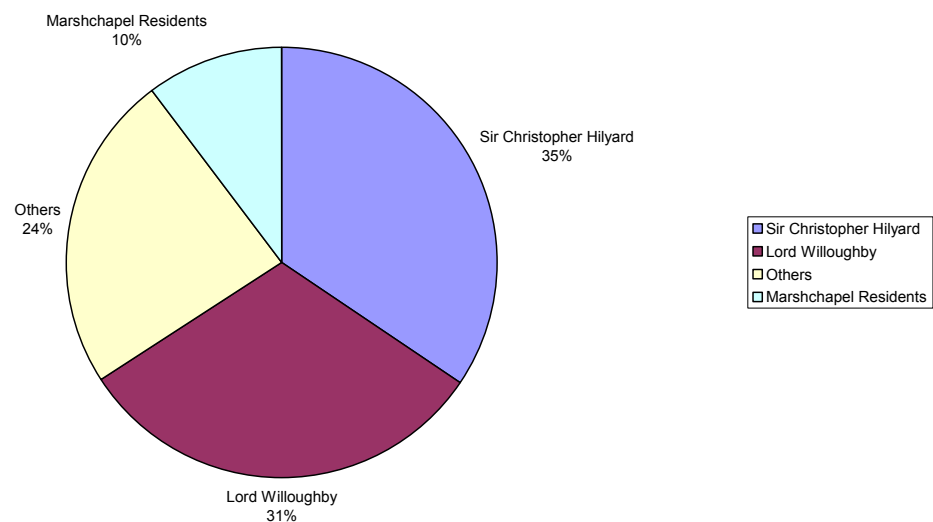
As Figure 4.1 demonstrates, the two lords of the manor, Lord Willoughby and Sir Christopher Hilyard, whom we met in Chapter Two, between them owned a little more

²²¹ LAO Inv. 78/200.

²²² Personal communication.

than two thirds of the land in Marshchapel. Their holdings were scattered throughout the three precincts in parcels ranging in size from less than a quarter of an acre to more than 27 acres, though the majority were less than ten acres. Sir Christopher held a total of nearly 635 acres in Marshchapel, 55 acres more than Lord Willoughby. The balance was reversed in Fulstow where the latter owned 1,081 acres compared to Sir Christopher's 956 acres, so that over the two parishes the Willoughby share was larger by just 70 acres.

Figure 4.1 Owners of freehold land in Marshchapel in 1595.



Almost two thirds of the remaining 630 acres in Marshchapel was shared between three individuals, none of whom was resident in the parish. Of these three, a Mr. Allington, probably George Allington of Swinhope, held by far the largest share. He had acquired much of the land which had previously belonged to Louth Abbey. In 1595 Mr Allington owned approximately 219 acres in Marshchapel and 166 acres in Fulstow. The next largest holding, 107 acres in Marshchapel and 80 acres in Fulstow, had been bequeathed to the 'heirs Jolliffe'. Henry Jolliffe, citizen and scrivener of St. Martin in the Vintry in London, whose will was proved in Canterbury in 1596 and who had lands in Fulstow and Tetney, had almost certainly been the owner until his death.²²³ A Mr. Slanee held a little over 79½ acres in Marshchapel and 9½ acres in Fulstow; in 1584 Stephen Slanye, citizen and alderman of London, had purchased property in Fulstow and Marshchapel

²²³ TNA PCC 79 Drake, 1596.

from Patrick Sacheverall, gent, and his wife, Anne, of Hemswell in Nottinghamshire. At the cost of £400 he acquired three messuages, three gardens, one orchard, 40 acres of land, 20 acres of meadow, 20 acres of pasture and 200 acres of salt marsh with appurtenances, rather more than he seems to have held in 1595. The Sacheveralls' tenants in 1584 were John Houghton, John Dawson and Thomas Dawson, whose holding included two salt cotes and 200 acres of 'mottye ground'.²²⁴ It is possible that Slanee's land continued to be occupied by these tenants or their heirs in 1595 but the field book does not provide that information.

If we exclude the small parcels attributed to the rectory, the common and Queen Elizabeth (land which was previously owned by 'Malton Abba', the field book records), there was approximately 220 acres shared amongst the 29 remaining free holdings. Only six of the 29 held more than ten acres. Five of them, Walter Harpham, Thomas and Julian Grant, Thomas Dawson and Thomas Marshall were local inhabitants. The sixth was a Mr Broxholme, who held a total of a little more than 12 acres. The remaining 23 freeholders, who each held less than ten acres, accounted for a little over 70 acres. Sixteen of these were Marshchapel parishioners and the majority of them were related by blood or by marriage to one or more of the five who owned more than ten acres. Before moving on to consider the social and economic status of the local freeholders it is relevant to explore the role of the Broxholmes in Marshchapel.

The Mr Broxholme who held 12 acres in Marshchapel in 1595 was probably a descendant of John Broxholme who, in 1548, with John Bellow, had acquired a house in Marshchapel which was in the tenure of a John Lyson and which had previously belonged to Gokewell Priory, a small priory of Cistercian nuns in the parish of Broughton in North Lincolnshire.²²⁵ These men came from relatively humble beginnings to rise to establish families of yeomen or lesser gentry, the Bellows of Great Grimsby and the Broxholmes of Owersby near Market Rasen. As an agent of Cromwell, John Bellow arrived in Louth in 1536, having been appointed as one of the commissioners for the dissolution of Legbourne Priory. He was placed in the stocks by the rebels but was fortunate to be released with little more than hurt pride. He became

²²⁴ LAO LD 85/4/C.

²²⁵ D.M. Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow," *Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society Reports and Papers*. (1948 -1951). p.28.

mayor of Grimsby four times and Member of Parliament six times between 1547 and 1559.²²⁶

Bellow and Broxholme became well known as speculators or intermediaries in the purchase and sale of monastic land in Lincolnshire. For example, in 1544, John Broxholme paid £1,222.15s.6d. for monastic property most of which was in Lincolnshire and in 1545, with John Bellow, he was granted lands belonging to 22 Lincolnshire monastic houses for a payment of £790. Neither Bellow nor Broxholme built up great country estates; they were acting as agents, buying up land to sell on at a profit. As a consequence of the activity of such intermediaries, aspiring yeomen were given access to monastic land in smaller parcels which were within their financial reach.²²⁷ Examples of lands in Marshchapel belonging to religious houses at Louth, Malton and Gokewell falling into new hands have already been cited but other abbeys, including Ormsby, Alvingham, Willoughton, and Greenfield, are known to have had interests in Marshchapel.²²⁸ Detailed information about how such lands changed hands is scarce but it is possible that other freeholders in Marshchapel had acquired their land as an indirect result of the Dissolution.

Six of the small freeholders were not resident in Marshchapel. It has not been possible, so far, to trace Francis Official, Nicholas Thorndyke, or Mr Mansfield, all of whom held small parcels of freehold land. Mr Gering owned a quarter of an acre and held 146 acres in tenure from Lord Willoughby. His lease included 'two maures each with a salt cote upon it', though there is evidence to indicate that he was subletting these two salterns rather than taking an active role in the manufacture of salt.²²⁹ Another two outsiders, Blanchard 'heires' and a Mr Moynes, held small parcels of freehold land and no land in tenure in Marshchapel. The first of these were the heirs of Gilbert Blanchard, yeoman, of Louth who was referred to in Chapter One. He held a little more than 1¼ acres but he had also held land in Grainthorpe; he sold two acres of meadow there to Robert Storre.²³⁰ As one of only 12 yeomen in Louth, according to a list of 1561, Gilbert seems

²²⁶ Anne Ward, *Lincolnshire Rising 1536*. (Workers Educational Council East Midland District, 1986).p.11.Clive Holmes, *Seventeenth Century Lincolnshire*, ed. Maurice Barley, vol. VII, *History of Lincolnshire* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 1980).p.105.

²²⁷ Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*.pp.7,61,105.

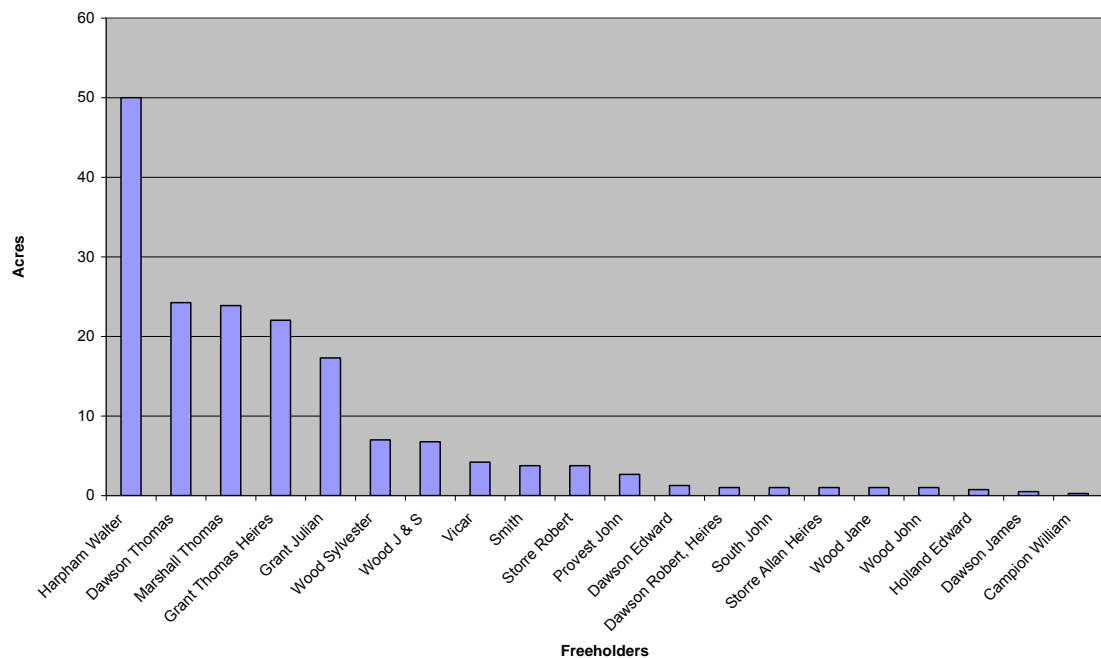
²²⁸ Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow."pp.22-29.

²²⁹ LAO Misc Doc 1000/15/35.

²³⁰ LAO LCC Wills 1595 i, 78.

to have played a significant role in the corporate life of the town. He first became Warden of the Corporation in 1557 and held the office for 22 out of the first 70 years of its existence. He was Churchwarden five times between 1545 and 1582. He died in 1587, having fathered at least 12 children.²³¹ He was a mercer and, as such, was known in Marshchapel, for the Blanchard name appears occasionally in inventories in connection with debts for clothing.²³² In 1547 Edmond Cowper chose him as supervisor of his will.²³³

Figure 4.2 Marshchapel freeholders in 1595



The Mr Moyne who owned just less than four acres with three tenements and two cottages was almost certainly an heir of Thomas Moigne of North Willingham, a member of a new Lincolnshire gentry family. As one of the commissioners charged with the task of valuing benefices, Thomas became involved in events in Louth in 1536. He was detained by the rebels on the 2nd October and later, suspected of having sympathy with the rebels, he was executed for treason in 1537. It was Thomas's daughter, Elizabeth, who had married Thomas Morrison of Cadeby and his granddaughter by that marriage who later became the wife of George Allington of

²³¹ J.E Swaby, *History of Louth* (London: 1951).p.178.

²³² LAO LCC Admons 1581-1589/724.

²³³ LAO LCC Wills 1547-9/83.

Swinhope.²³⁴ It may have been by this route that Mr Allington acquired the land in Fulstow and Marshchapel which had previously belonged to Louth Abbey. Figure 4.2 shows the size of the holdings of local residents who held freehold land in Marshchapel in 1595. Of the 21 freeholders only five held more than ten acres and they represented only three families, the Harphams, the Grants and the Dawsons. At least seven of the remaining 16 were in some way related to one or more of the three families.

The Harphams

Figure 4.3 Walter Harpham's 'capital messuage' as depicted in Haiwarde's map and here outlined in red.



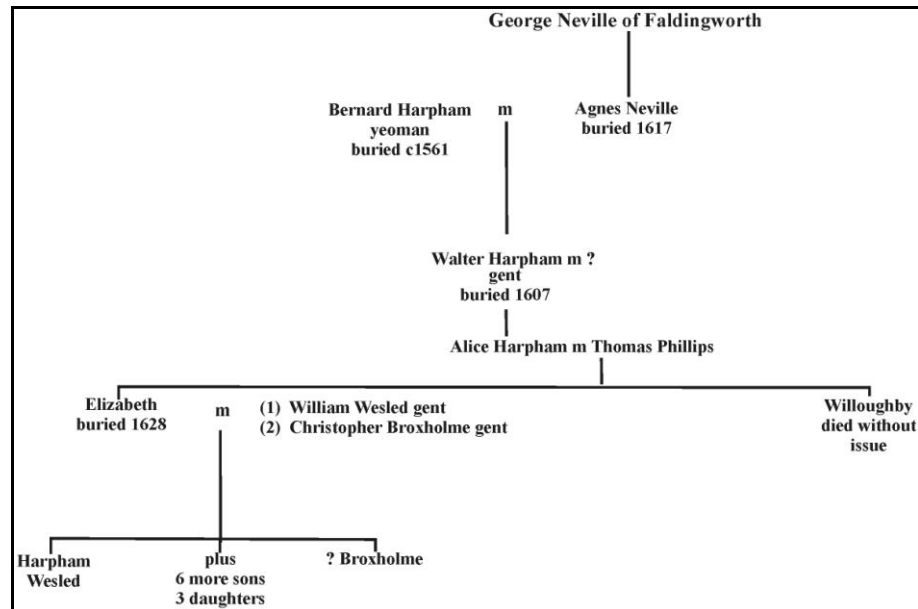
Walter Harpham's 50 acres was the largest freeholding of any of those who lived in the parish. It included nine 'tenements' and two 'messuages'. He also held 308 acres in tenure, significantly more than any other tenant in Marshchapel. His lease holding included three tenements, two messuages, one cottage, five salt cotes and a windmill. The Harphams seem to have arrived in the parish towards the middle of the sixteenth century. Walter's father, Bernard Harpham, had married Agnes Neville, daughter of George Neville of Faldingworth, in about 1548. When he wrote his will in 1561 Bernard styled himself 'yeoman'. He left the lease of a farm called Swyne Farm to his wife and, apart from a few smaller legacies, left the residue to Walter.²³⁵ Bernard's

²³⁴ Holmes, *Seventeenth Century Lincolnshire*, A.R. Maddison, ed., *Lincolnshire Pedigrees* (Harleian Society).p.679.

²³⁵ LAO LCC Wills 1562, 151.

neighbours also described him as a ‘yeoman’ when drawing up his probate inventory. His goods were valued at £88.6s.0d.²³⁶

Figure 4.4 The Harpham family



Walter Harpham, who could have been little more than 13 years old when his father died, had clearly prospered in the 34 years to 1595. At his death in February 1607 his goods, not including any of his real estate or his unexpired leases, were valued at £1,411.14s.8d.²³⁷ When drawing up his will, Walter Harpham styled himself ‘gent’.²³⁸ His ‘capital message’ is clearly identifiable on Haiwarde’s map as a substantial building. According to his inventory, there were at least 14 rooms including a dining chamber, a groom’s chamber and a study. He must have lived in some degree of comfort. The panelling in his dining room, for example, was valued at £5, the three tables were each covered by a ‘carpet’, there were three forms, three chairs, three stools, a dozen cushions and a pair of virginals, the only musical instruments to appear in the Marshchapel documents before 1650. The furnishings of his study included panelling, a desk and his books. He left to his ‘cousin’, Thomas Dawson, a suit made of ‘grosgrain’, a corded fabric of silk mixed with mohair or wool. His ‘purse and apparell’ alone were valued at £100 and debts owing to him were assessed at £330.8s.8d.

²³⁶ LAO Inv. 40/86.

²³⁷ LAO Inv 102/252.

²³⁸ LAO LCC Wills 1607 ii, 306.

Walter clearly had diverse interests in the local economy. At his death in February 1607 he owned 37 head of cattle valued at £86, 33 horses worth £117.10s. and 440 sheep valued at £122. His crops in store included hay worth £13.6s.8d., barley worth £18.13s.4d., malt at £4, beans ‘thrashed and unthrashed’ valued at £8 and white peas and oats at £3.10s. He kept pigs, bees and poultry. He had facilities for making cheese and beer. He owned a keel and a cobble ‘with all their tack and furniture’ worth £60. The keel was a trading vessel and the cobble would have been used for inshore fishing. Walter held the fishing and fowling rights of the haven from Sir Christopher Hilyard. His horse mill was valued at £5. He must have been heavily involved in the salt industry for, when the survey was drawn up in 1595, he held five of the 13 salt cotes still remaining and, at his death in 1607, he owned ‘fouer salte panes with hoppes, harrowes, bules and other implements’ valued at £10.²³⁹

Walter was a man of substance and one who was exceptional in Marshchapel. Although there is no evidence in the available documents that he attained office at county or national level he was clearly a man of status in his own parish. His name appears frequently amongst those chosen to be appraiser of inventories and supervisors of wills and guardians of children left fatherless. His own last testament seems to indicate some social concern. He left £12 to Lincoln Cathedral, £10 for the repair of Marshchapel church and another £10 to the ‘poor man’s box’. There were several bequests towards the bringing up of individual children or for putting children to apprenticeships and many others to family, friends and servants. He gave Henry Carr 20s. and cancelled his debts on condition ‘that he make to me or to my executor perfect account of such debts’. In addition he gave him ‘one lease of the haven with the fishing and fouleing which I have by grant from Sir Christopher Hilyard’. To tenants Henry Smith, William Champion, Christopher Wilson and Bernard Crowston, he bequeathed 10s. each and required that they should be allowed to continue to ‘enjoy all such grounds as they farm’. This appears to indicate they were tenants of his freehold rather than subtenants of his leasehold land. Perhaps he was also a man with social aspirations. His ‘landlord’, Sir Christopher Hilyard, and his ‘very good friend’, Sir William Willoughby, each received a triple gold sovereign and a double sovereign went to Sir William’s wife.

²³⁹ LAO Inv 102/252, LAO LCC Wills 1607 ii, 306.

One can imagine that such a man would have liked to hand on his wealth to a son who could carry on the family name, but he had only a daughter, Alice. He left to his 'well beloved wife', Agnes, £100 and an income of £40 a year during her life time to be taken out of his lands, which were otherwise bequeathed in their entirety to his daughter. Alice was married to Thomas Phillips, the largest tenant farmer in Fulstow, with a holding of 314 acres from Sir Christopher and just under 1½ acres from Lord Willoughby. He held the lease of, Northhall, the Hilyard manor house. Thomas and Alice had two children by 1608; Walter left £100 to grandson, Willoughby, who later died childless and £300 to his granddaughter, Elizabeth.

Figure 4.5 North Hall, the Hilyard manor house and home of Thomas and Alice Phillips, here outlined in red



Walter Harpham's memory has been kept alive in Marshchapel over the 400 years since his death. In the south wall of the chancel of St Mary's church, in a style typical of the seventeenth century, is a small alabaster monument dedicated to him and his wife. It depicts two kneeling figures, a man and a woman, with a child at their feet. According to the inscription, granddaughter Elizabeth had seven sons and three daughters by her first husband, William Wesled, and an eighth son by her second husband, Christopher Broxholme. Elizabeth died in 1638 aged 53 years. Amongst the papers held by Marshchapel Parish Council there is a copy of an indenture dated 30th November 1652 which records the purchase, by the Overseers of the Poor, of 'a cottage or tenement' with five roods and two acres and one rood of pasture in a close called Mills Croft and another two acres two roods in Poor Croft in Marshchapel at a cost of £110 from Walter's great grandson, Harpham Wesled of Great Grimsby, for the benefit of the poor of that parish. The money to buy the property, which had been in danger of 'being lost',

came from the legacies of Mrs Harpham, Walter's widow, Mrs Mills, formerly Ursula Grant, Mr Allan Storre, Mr. William Storre and 'other well disposed Christians'.²⁴⁰ More recently, the access road to a small modern development on what was the site of Walter's 'capital messuage' has been named 'Harpham's Way'.

Figure 4.6 The Harpham memorial in Marshchapel church



The Dawsons

The Harpham family names must have demanded respect in Marshchapel but its appearance in the parish documents was only short lived because of the absence of a male heir. The Dawsons's story was different; there were over 100 entries before 1650. They had been in the parish at least since the early sixteenth century. There is considerable documentary evidence of the active involvement in the salt industry of members of this family in various roles from the 1530s until the beginning of the seventeenth century. Their story is interesting because it covers several generations and shows how the fortunes of different members of a family can vary. It is usually an advantage to be the eldest son. Younger sons can be helped to earn a living by taking a subsidiary role in a family business. There were some Dawsons who owned salt pans which suggests that they were owners or tenants of salterns and engaged in salt manufacture. There were others, often a younger brother, who owned a salt cart

²⁴⁰ Lincoln Charities 1819-1837, in *Charity Commission Report*.

indicating that they were engaged in the buying and selling of salt. The first Dawson to become visible in the records is John who died in 1539, leaving five sons, John, Charles, Robert, Leonard and Christopher and at least two daughters, Alyson and Catherine.²⁴¹ He makes reference to two brothers, William and Christopher. Sir Robert Dawson, the curate who was a witness to the will, may also have been a relative as, perhaps, was Sir John Dawson who was curate in Marshchapel in the 1590s.²⁴² The church provided another means for younger sons to earn a livelihood and to maintain social status.

It has not been possible to piece together the various branches of the family tree to 1595, partly because there is no reliable evidence from the parish register until 1589 but also because the Dawsons tended to favour a limited selection of given names. Some examples will be sufficient to illustrate the varying fortunes of different members of the family and to indicate their economic status and role in the community. Evidence from John's will of 1539 shows that he had some copyhold land and he had a little spare cash. He left legacies to Lincoln Cathedral, to Fulstow, Marshchapel and Covenham churches and 16d to James Wyght, the parson of Bag Enderby. His son, John, was entrusted with 11s.4d to ensure that an obit was said annually for his soul and John, the younger, at his death, was to pass on this 11s.4d to someone he trusted so that the obits could continue and there was to be 5d. for the clerk and 2d for the bells 'every yere whylle the world stands'. It was probably his brother Christopher whose inventory, drawn up in 1548, records two salt pans valued at £2, as well as 19 head of cattle, five horses and a long list of debts.²⁴³ Robert who died the following year leaving goods worth £50.11s., including three salt pans valued at £2 as well as 21 cattle, four oxen, seven horses, 100 sheep, was probably another brother.²⁴⁴

The John Dawson who died in 1557 and whose will was proved at Louth in 1558 was, almost certainly, the son of John Dawson above; there is no sign of the 11s.4d but times had changed. He left 16 cattle, two oxen and four horses.²⁴⁵ He, too, had sons John and James as well as two daughters. His brother, Charles, seems to have prospered. At his death in 1556 he left five surviving sons and a daughter as well as two stepsons, John

²⁴¹ LAO LCC Wills 1538-40, 320.

²⁴² C.W. Foster, ed., *The State of the Church in the Diocese of Lincoln*, vol. 23 (Horncastle: Lincoln Record Society, 1926).p.389.

²⁴³ LAO Inv 16/15.

²⁴⁴ LAO Inv 18/206.

²⁴⁵ LAO Inv. 31/829, LAO LCC Wills 1558 ii, 90.

and Thomas Petch. His goods were valued at £95.3s. He had 25 head of cattle worth £28.13.4d, six oxen valued at £15, seven horses and 45 sheep. He also had three salt pans valued at £3, turf worth £13, moulds valued at £8 and salt valued at £1. Amongst other legacies, he was able to bequeath to his wife the farm that he lived in; to son John the farm occupied by William Marflet; to Robert a pasture called Colobeyn; to Charles the house he had bought from Charles Skelton; to Oliver the house that Oliver Moke lived in, and another house nearby as well as half a 'holme' and two little pingles; and to Anna, a close at Grainthorpe. He also left 20s. to be distributed to his poor neighbours. As supervisors of his will he appointed Arthur Washinglay, Barnard Harpham and Thomas Hagg, three of the most substantial men of the parish at that time.²⁴⁶ Another brother, Leonard, who died in 1563 leaving four children, Robert, Thomas, Elizabeth and Charlotte, appeared to be only a little less prosperous. There was no evidence of salt making in his probate documents but he held land from 'my ladie of Suffolk' and he owed money to Mr Gering which may indicate that he held other land by lease.²⁴⁷

Lawrence Dawson, husbandman, seemed to have had rather less in the way of real estate at his death in 1569, partly because he did not survive his father. His goods were valued at £37.19s.4d. He owned 13 head of cattle worth £10.16s.4d, 2 oxen, 4 horses and 9 sheep. He left a salt cart which would indicate that he had combined farming with trading in salt.²⁴⁸ His father, John Dawson, died two years later leaving goods valued at £76.0s.3d, including 22 head of cattle, two oxen, five horses and five pigs. He bequeathed a house to his daughter's son and left the income from the lease of a farm to grandson, Lawrence. Listed among his possessions in his inventory 'at the saltcotes' were 'in mould and turfes and salt with two salt pans with the bewels, hops and harrows with other things belonging to the saltcotes' valued at £7 and, among his debts, money that he owed for the delivery of turf.²⁴⁹

When he died in 1577, Christopher Dawson left a brood of young children, the lease of a farm, goods worth £42.7s. and debts amounting to £13.1s.8d. In his will he specified that his salt cart, among other items, should be sold to pay his debts and his appraisers

²⁴⁶ LAO Inv. 28/261, LAO LCC Wills 1552-6, 106.

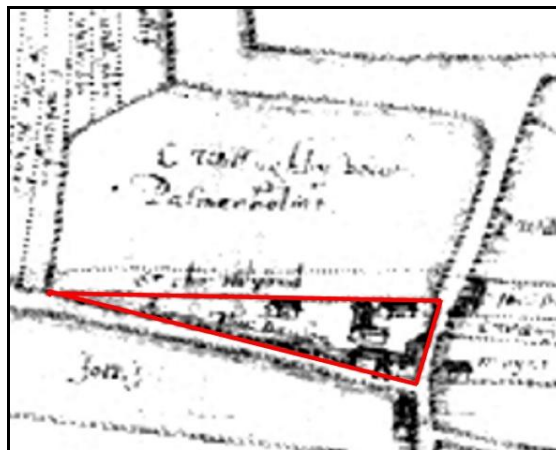
²⁴⁷ LAO Inv. 41/90. LAO LCC Wills 1563, 31.

²⁴⁸ LAO Inv. 49/269, LAO LCC Wills, 1569 i 47.

²⁴⁹ LAO Inv. 50/288, LAO LCC Wills 1571 ii 15.

faithfully listed in his inventory: 'Legacy for payment of dette one balde mare, a salt cart with all the furniture £4.10s.' His son, Arthur, was to have the years that were remaining of the lease of Jolliffe's land and, unless she remarried, his wife was to have the years remaining of the farm that he leased from Mr. Hilyard.²⁵⁰ In December 1591, the goods of another Christopher Dawson, salter, were appraised by his neighbours and valued at £25.5s.4d and debts owing to him amounted to £3.8s.4d. Amongst his goods he had 'one salt cart furnished' valued at 8s.4d. as well as the lease of his farm worth £6 and 'the sea card and the books thereto belonging' assessed at 3s.4d.²⁵¹ The words 'carte' and 'card' were both used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to denote a chart or a map. Perhaps Christopher Dawson was combining fishing with his other activities of farming and trading in salt though it is also possible that he transported some salt by sea.

Figure 4.7 Thomas Dawson's messuage and garth at Eastham, now Escombe, in Marshchapel, outlined in red



The Thomas Dawson who died in 1588 was described as 'yeoman' in his probate inventory and in his will.²⁵² His goods, which included three salt pans, were valued at £258.0s.8d. He had 43 head of cattle, 10 oxen and 18 horses. It seems likely that this was the Thomas who was the tenant of Mr Slanee's two salt cotes and 200 acres of 'mottye' ground in 1584 and father of Thomas who held 24 acres of freehold land in Marshchapel in 1595. This Thomas was also credited with 12½ acres in tenure but he farmed other land belonging to Walter Harpham, though the field book would not record this information, and it is possible that, in addition, he occupied the two salt

²⁵⁰ LAO Inv. 61/232, LAO LCC Wills 1577 ii, 60.

²⁵¹ LAO LCC Admons 1592/242.

²⁵² LAO Inv. 75/235, LAO LCC Wills 1588 ii, 227.

cotes and 200 acres of Mr Slanee.²⁵³ This was the Thomas Dawson described by Walter Harpham as his cousin and almost certainly the same man referred to in Chapter Two to whom we owe the survival of the field books. So far, we know little more of this Thomas Dawson as neither his will nor his probate inventory has come to light; a Thomas Dawson, husbandman, died in 1592 and another in 1637, neither of whom appears to fit the bill.

Three other Dawsons held small parcels of freehold land in 1595. Edward held 1½ acres and James one tenement with a garth of 18 perches. The heires of Robert were credited with a pasture of one acre and four perches freehold and, in tenure a little more than 24½ acres with a tenement, a messuage and a cottage. Robert was buried in August the previous year, just six days after the baptism of his only child, Faith, and six days before her burial. He left his land to his brother, Thomas, probably the husbandman rather than yeoman Thomas, who had only a sister.²⁵⁴ James Dawson, husbandman, died in May 1609 with goods valued at £94.7s.8d, including a lease from Sir Christopher worth £26 and the lease of a cottage and two acres of land from Lord Willoughby which was valued at £5. James's debts amounted to £21.3s., including £6 owing to Arthur Dawson, presumably his brother and father of Christopher, William and Mary.²⁵⁵ This may have been the same Arthur Dawson who was the curate at Marshchapel from 1600 to 1629 and who was buried at Fulstow in 1630.

The Grants

Thomas Grant had been the third largest Marshchapel freeholder until his death in 1594. In the 1595 survey his heirs were credited with 22 acres of freehold in Marshchapel, five acres freehold in Fulstow and 12½ acres in tenure in Marshchapel. The Grants appear to have been relative newcomers to Marshchapel and, like the Harphams, the family name was short lived in the parish register because of failure of the male line. There were only six Grant entries in the parish register between 1589 and 1650, none later than 1605 and all six were burials. The first Grant to become visible in the Marshchapel documents was Thomas's brother, Robert Grant, husbandman, whose will was proved in 1587.²⁵⁶ Apart from small legacies to the church and to his nieces and

²⁵³ LAO LCC Wills 1607 ii, 306.

²⁵⁴ LAO LCC Wills 1594 i, 68.

²⁵⁵ LAO LCC Wills 1609 i, 122.

²⁵⁶ LAO LCC Wills 1587, 100.

nephews, one of whom was Sylvester Wood, he left the lease of his house to his son Abraham, £20 to Julian, his daughter, and the residue to his wife, Jane. Abraham died a bachelor in 1594 leaving the bulk of his estate to his sister, Julian. His goods were valued at £15.14s. but this could not have represented his true wealth. At the time of the survey in 1595, Julian held the freehold of a little over 17½ acres in Marshchapel and a further 33 acres in tenure.

Thomas Grant described himself as a yeoman when he prepared his will as did the clerk who recorded his death in the parish register. He may have owed his rise in the world partially to a propitious marriage. He had married, Janet, daughter and heir of Arthur Washinglay of Marshchapel, whose will was proved in August 1585.²⁵⁷ Arthur's death may have been recorded in the parish register but the entries for 1585 have not survived intact. There are no other Washinglay entries by 1650. Arthur seems to have been a man of some standing in the community during his lifetime. He had featured frequently as an appraiser and a supervisor of wills, at least since 1540. Janet Grant's legacy from her father included some interest in property in Saltfleetby, land in Grainthorpe which Arthur Washinglay had bought from the Right Worshipful Mr Thomas Morryson, the freehold of two houses in Marshchapel and the lease of another from Lord Willoughby. Arthur left smaller legacies to each of his seven granddaughters, namely, Elizabeth Marshall, Epham Smith, Emmott Holland, Jane Wood and Ursula, Anna and Susan Grant. His executor was Thomas Grant and among the witnesses were husbands of three of his granddaughters, Thomas Marshall, Robert Holland and Richard Wood.

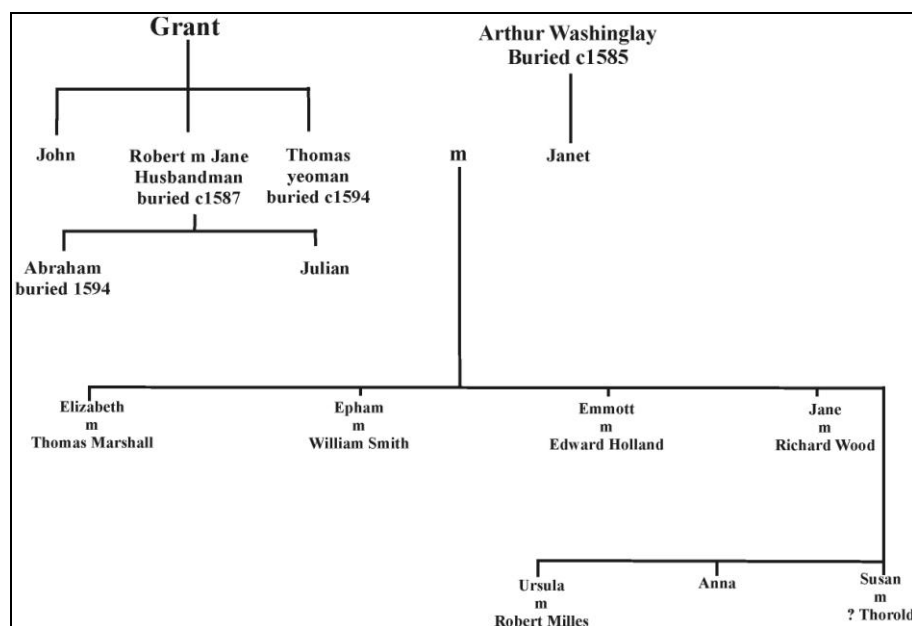
It was rare for status to be indicated in the parish register before 1600 or Arthur might have been described as 'gent'. The names of the supervisors of Arthur's will, Mr Thomas Morryson, Mr Peter Gering and Thomas Dawson, suggest that he was well connected. The first of these, Thomas Morrison of Cadeby, the same from whom Arthur had bought the land in Grainthorpe, was of landed gentry. He had been MP for Grimsby in 1572, 1584, 1586 and 1589 and mayor in 1576 and Clerk of the Pipes.²⁵⁸ Arthur Washinglay gave Morryson 'for his pains' his 'swan marke with all the game of swannes which maie be found thereon'. Mr Peter Gering was given a gold ring of 3lbs. in weight. Mr Alexander Gering received a legacy of 'all my statute books of parlyment

²⁵⁷ LAO LCC Wills 1585 ii, 89.

²⁵⁸ Hodgett, *Tudor Lincolnshire*.p.105; Maddison, ed., *Lincolnshire Pedigrees*.p.694; Hesler, ed., *The History of Parliament. The House of Commons 1558-1603*. (1981).

laws'. In 1595 a Mr Gering owned a quarter of an acre of land in Marshchapel but he also held the lease of 146 acres including two 'maures' belonging to Lord Willoughby, each with 'a saltcoate upon it' which were almost certainly sublet. In 1638 Richard Gering, gent, of Wintringham settled property on his son on the occasion of his marriage to Mary Kitching of Winterton.²⁵⁹ The third supervisor, local man Thomas Dawson whose status was explored above, was rewarded with 40s. 'for his pains'.

Figure 4.8 The Grant family



Arthur Washinglay's seven granddaughters were the 'heirs of Thomas Grant' referred to in the Marshchapel field book. Thomas Grant's goods were valued at £464.19s.²⁶⁰ Amongst his possessions were a lease of Lord Willoughby worth £10 and one of Sir Christopher Hilyard worth £26. He had 36 cattle, 14 horses and 175 sheep. Also listed were his two swords, a dagger, a pike, a halberd, a bill, two bows, two sheaves of arrows, two coats of plate and a steel cap. To his daughter, Ursula Milles, Thomas bequeathed, the grounds with the houses that he had on lease from Sir Christopher Hilyard. To another daughter, Jane Wood, he gave the right and interest in the lands and grounds in Marshchapel which he had recently purchased from his brother-in-law, Waterhouse, who still held land in Fulstow in 1595. Jane's husband, Richard Wood, was to have the house and ground that Thomas leased from Lord Willoughby. A third daughter, Susan Thorold, was granted all his house and grounds 'being within the town

²⁵⁹ LAO Misc. Doc. 1000/350.

²⁶⁰ LAO Inv. 85/126.

fields and territories of Louth ... which I lately purchased of William Grant, my cousin, of Louth aforesaid'. The lease of the house on the 'Landike' which he had bought from John Smith was to go to his servant, Janet Wilson. Like Walter Harpham and Arthur Washinglay, Thomas had failed to produce a male heir. His houses and his land in Louth, Grainthorpe, Marshchapel and Cawthorpe were to be shared amongst all his daughters who included, in addition to the three mentioned above, Elizabeth Marshall, Epham Smith, Agnes Wood and Emmett Holland.²⁶¹ The names of all of Thomas Grant's sons-in-law appear in the field book as land holders though, apart from Thomas Marshall, they were credited with only small parcels of land. It is quite possible, however, that some or all of them had holdings elsewhere.

In 1595 Thomas Marshall, whose wife was formerly Elizabeth Grant, held 23 acres with two tenements and a dove house in Marshchapel and just less than five acres in Fulstow. According to an indenture of 1597, in that year he held in tenure from Lord Willoughby a 'messuage or tenement ... sixty four acres of pasture, twelve acres of meadow, eleven acres of arable land and the half of eight acres being two salt holmes'.²⁶² Perhaps some of this was property had been acquired through his wife at the death of her grandfather, Arthur Washinglay. The fact that it included two salt holmes may indicate that Arthur Washinglay had previously worked active salterns. Among the smaller freeholders were Jane, Sylvester and John Wood. Jane who held one acre and another 6.7 acres jointly with Sylvester Wood, was the daughter of Thomas Grant who had married Richard Wood. Sylvester may have been their son; Robert Grant described him as his nephew.²⁶³ Two other small freeholders, William Smith with just under four acres and Edward Holland with under one acre were also sons-in-law of Thomas Grant, having married Epham and Emmott, respectively.

Of the remaining eight small freeholders, four can be dealt with quite briefly. The first of these three is William Fanthorpe, who owned just over six acres in Marshchapel and was almost certainly the same man mistakenly called William Falthrope who owned ten acres in Fulstow, where he was resident, and held 58 acres in tenure in the same parish. Richard Burton owned just over 7½ acres in Marshchapel and a little less than seven acres in Fulstow. The name does not appear in the Marshchapel parish register or in the

²⁶¹ LAO LCC Wills 1594 i 101.

²⁶² LAO H7/5.

²⁶³ LAO LCC Wills 1587, 100.

probate documents. However, in 1558 Walter Cowper of Marshchapel left in his will a bequest to be divided between Richard Burton's children of one lamb and the 10s. that Richard owed him.²⁶⁴ Neither Simon Gibson, who owned a quarter of an acre in Marshchapel, nor the heirs of John South, with just over three acres, held other land in our two parishes according to the survey. The only Gibson event recorded in the Marshchapel parish register was one death in 1587. There were 32 events relating to South recorded between 1590 and 1646; amongst them were a labourer and a fowler but none was called John. Not appearing in the register was a Nicholas South who died in 1583 and who chose as supervisor of his will Walter Harpham, 'my trusty and well beloved friend'. He left an infant daughter, Janet, and a son, Christopher, who was old enough to be executor.²⁶⁵ More is known of the four remaining freeholders, William Campion, John Provest and Allan and Robert Storre, who had all been established in the parish since the early sixteenth century.

The Campions

In 1595 William Campion owned a tenement and garth of just over a quarter of an acre in Marshchapel. There is no indication in the field books that he farmed any other land as owner or tenant in either of the two parishes but he was identified as his tenant by Walter Harpham in his will.²⁶⁶ There were approximately one hundred events relating to Campions recorded in the Marshchapel parish register between 1591 and 1650. Like the Dawsons, the Campion family had a long history in the parish and, like them, illustrate the varying fortunes of different members of the family. The earliest Campion record is the probate inventory of the clergyman, Sir John Campion whose goods were valued at £2.12s.4d in 1540/1 but he was owed £7.5s.8d, a yew and a lamb. The list of those who owed him money is interesting in that it included two Dawsons, two Cowpers and a Storre, Marshchapel family names that recur throughout the period of this study.²⁶⁷ There is evidence of an earlier William Campion who died in 1553 leaving goods valued at £7.15s. He had four beasts and a horse but the only other indication that he

²⁶⁴ LAO LCC Wills 1558 i, 136.

²⁶⁵ LAO LCC Wills 1583 ii, 30.

²⁶⁶ LAO LCC Wills 1607 ii, 306.

²⁶⁷ LAO Inv. 9/62.

may have held land is that he owed 6s.3d in rent. In addition, he owed £2.8s.6d to Edmond Campion and 10s to John Campion.²⁶⁸

After 1553 there is a gap in the documentation relating to the Campion family until the parish register becomes available. In 1589 William Campion, husbandman, married Margaret Dawson. They produced 11 children but only William, Allan, Walter and Deborah survived to adulthood. William, the eldest of the four, died in May 1626, aged 35, leaving £15 to each of his infant children, Margaret and John, 12d to his sister, Deborah, and the residue to his wife. He left 12 cattle, three horses, 19 sheep and 14 lambs.²⁶⁹ Earlier in May that year William Campion, the elder, yeoman had died. So far no will has been found and his inventory, signed by his son Walter, yeoman, lists only personal goods to the value of £1.10s.²⁷⁰ It is possible that the two Williams, father and son, knew that they were dying and had already given over the business of the farm to Walter.

Had the younger William survived to inherit from his father, he may have been in a better position to provide for his family at his death. His younger brothers, Walter and Allan seem to have thrived for they were both described as yeomen at their deaths. How had this been achieved? The documents that remain give no indication of any land. Was it the same Allan, described at his wedding to Mary Dawson in 1618 as ‘ropemaker’ and who later married Euday Joliffe in 1627 just a few months after Mary’s death? Allan Campion, yeoman, died in 1637 with goods valued at £135.15s., including 24 cattle, four horses, 18 sheep and ‘the third part of a quarter of a little barke or shippe’.²⁷¹ Euday was Ursula Milles’s goddaughter and may have been a member of the Joliffe family who owned nearly 100 acres in Marshchapel in 1595 but no evidence has yet been found which would support this theory. The third brother, Walter, died in January 1648 leaving goods valued at £336.13s.4d. including £64 in bonds and debts owing to him, a herd of 27 cattle, five horses, 95 old sheep and 60 sheep hoggs. He bequeathed £50 to each of his five surviving children, Walter, Ann, Margaret, Katherine and Ellen, all of whom were under 21. He also left £30 in case his wife was with child. His daughter, Isabel, was baptised the following August but was orphaned 16 months later

²⁶⁸ LAO Inv. 21/366.

²⁶⁹ LAO Inv. 131/169, 1626, LAO LCC Wills 1626, 668.

²⁷⁰ LAO LCC Admons 1626/52.

²⁷¹ LAO LCC Wills 1637/40.

on the death of her mother in January, 1650. In her will, Ann Campion gave her only son, Walter, the onerous task of bringing up his five sisters and of taking bonds to ensure that he could pay them their portions when they reached twenty one.

The Provests

In 1595 John Provest owned a tenement in Marshchapel with a garth of a little more than 2½ acres. There were only three Provest events recorded in Marschapel parish register during the period of this study. All three of those events occurred during the 12 years from 1588 to 1600 but there is evidence of this family name in the parish more than fifty years earlier and there is also evidence that some Provests were involved in the salt trade. In 1530, Walter Provest died leaving three young sons, William, John and Richard. Though described as a labourer, he had sufficient funds to leave 6d to the work of Lincoln cathedral, 8d. to the high altar of Marshchapel, 6d each to the churches of Fulstow, North Cotes and Grainthorpe and an additional 2s for the new organ at Marshchapel. He bequeathed 16s.8d to each of his sons as well as a cow, a calf and a sheep. His wife, Janet, was to have the residue of his goods and also the children and their portions unless she remarried. If she were to marry a good man who would keep the conditions laid down in the Walter's will then she could keep the children and their goods and money, but if he were not a good man then Janet, with John and Edmond Cowper and any of Walter's good friends, should see to it that his sons and their goods should be put to some good man so that the children could have their legacies when they reached the age of 16 or 17.²⁷²

Whether Janet remarried or whether a good man or a bad, we know not. It is unlikely that the widow Janet Provest whose goods were appraised in October 1569, nearly 40 years later was Walter's wife. Two other Janet Provests were widowed that year, one of them was the wife of Thomas Provest who had died in July. To his son, John, Thomas bequeathed a cow, a brass pot and his clothes and to each of his two daughters, Janet and Dorothy, he left a cow and some bed linen. His wife, who was appointed his executrix, was to have the residue. His probate inventory was apparently drawn up on 30th July, 1569 on the same day that he signed his will. His goods were valued at £13.8s. and included seven head of cattle worth £6 and a horse. Listed amongst other items, together valued at 3s.4d, there is what appears to be two 'welling shovels', items

²⁷² LAO LCC Wills 1520-31, 216.

that a ‘salt weller’ might have used in separating the salt crystals from the boiling brine during the salt making process. Janet Provest, almost certainly Thomas’s widow, had goods valued at £6.12s, but she also had debts totalling £4.5s.8d, including rent of £2.3s.4d. Like Thomas, she had three pigs and two swine worth 10s.²⁷³

Thomas may have been Walter’s nephew, son of his brother, John. At least one of Walter’s sons was, also, engaged in the salt trade. William Provest, salter, also died in 1569. His two brothers, Richard and John, had survived to marry and have children. William and his wife, Janet, had a son, John, and three daughters, Elizabeth, Janet and Helen. At least in William’s case, his father’s concerns about his material well being, which were apparent in his will, appear to have been unfounded. He described himself as ‘salter’ when he drew up his will in November 1569. His goods, which were appraised at £33.6s, included 16 head of cattle, eight horses and 20 sheep. The rent of the vicar’s close for two years was valued at 24s. and the hay from Dunholm Close was worth £2.13.4d. He owned a salt cart and ‘4 pare of trace with measures’. His debts and credits are of interest and will be explored more fully in Chapter Six; it is sufficient here to mention that he owed £8.5s to Mr. Jolliffe’s clerk for nine year’s rent. Like his father, he died before his children reached adulthood but he was in a better position to provide for them than his father had been. His youngest daughter, Helen, for example, was bequeathed ‘one copple of young steres and a young quye and the rente of the vicar’s pasture and one pare of cart wheles and William Storr to have the moving of them and he to pay to Helen 4s. at the end of two years, one back chaire, four pewter dublers, one bed with all thereunto belonging and one brasse pott’. Helen was also to receive 5s from her uncle, Richard, one year after her father’s death in return for a black filly which William bequeathed to him. Again, like his father, he needed to take precautions in case his wife should remarry. In that event William’s executors, his brother, John, and a William Hill were to take bonds as surety or take the children’s portions into their own hands.²⁷⁴

It seems likely that it was William’s son, John, who owned the tenement and garth in Marshchapel in 1595 but there were, at least two other possibilities. It could have been his brother, John, or it could have been Thomas’s son. One John Provest baptised a son,

²⁷³ LAO Inv. 29/176.

²⁷⁴ LAO Inv 49/267, LAO LCC Wills 1569 i, 44.

John, in 1588 and another died a bachelor in 1600. Why the family name should disappear so abruptly from the parish register is not immediately obvious. Perhaps it was the result of a combination of two different factors: in one case, the failure of the male line and in the other, the end of the salt making industry in the area.

The Storres

Three members of the Storre family appear amongst the small freeholders of Marshchapel in 1595 but they were of greater substance than may at first appear. Father and son, Robert and Allan Storre, owned five and three acres respectively in Marshchapel whilst Allan had 121 acres in tenure and Walter, Robert's brother, held 62 acres. Robert may have been the same man who had purchased two acres of meadow in Grainthorpe from Gilbert Blanchard of Louth.²⁷⁵ It seems likely that Allan Starre whose heires would benefit from 29 acres freehold and a tenancy of 63 acres in Fulstow belonged to the same family or may have been the same Allan who owned three acres in Marshchapel, but there is no evidence in either the Marshchapel or the Fulstow parish registers of a burial that might help to clarify his identity. By 1597, the land that Allan Storre had held by lease from Lord Willoughby was in the hands of Walter Harpham.²⁷⁶

There were 35 entries relating to the Storre family in Marshchapel parish register between 1589 and 1651. The family becomes visible in the documents as early as 1547 with the death of Walter Storre. His goods were valued at £16.13s. He left 16 head of cattle, four oxen and eight horses. His debts totalled £5.2s.10d and included £2 for the 'for the repair of my farm and the rebuilding of a salt cote' and 33s. for stove lead. He appears to have had three sons, Robert, William and Edmond.²⁷⁷ Edmond Storre died in 1553 with goods valued at £25.8s.4d. Amongst them were 24 cattle, two oxen, seven horses and 57 sheep but there was no evidence of his involvement in the salt industry. His brother, William, who died in 1569, was apparently childless, for he left his property to his wife and to his brother, Robert, and Robert's son, Allan Storre of Fulstow.²⁷⁸ His goods included six cattle, three horses, the lease of a farm valued at £20 and 'one salt cart with geares'. By the time the third brother, Robert, died in 1595 he was styled 'yeoman' in the parish register. His goods were valued at £255.7s.8d

²⁷⁵ LAO LCC Wills 1595 i, 78.

²⁷⁶ LAO H7/13.

²⁷⁷ LAO LCC Wills 1547-9/83.

²⁷⁸ LAO LCC Wills 1569 i, 16.

including £73.14s owing to him. He had 19 cattle, two oxen, 9 horses and 130 sheep. He also had a 'mould bewell' which suggests a connection with salt but by 1595 he must have been quite elderly and the industry would have been running down.²⁷⁹ There is no further reference to the salt industry in any later documents relating to the Storre family. If this indicates the end of their involvement in the industry or the end of the industry itself, Robert's sons, Allen, Walter and George do not seem to have suffered economically as a result. When Walter died a few years after his father, his goods were valued at £250.4s.4d. He left 28 head of cattle, two oxen, 13 horses and over 200 sheep. He had 22 stones of wool in store valued at £14 and a lease worth £26.8s.4d.²⁸⁰ His brother Allen was described as 'yeoman' at his death in 1612. His goods were valued at about £340 and he had 24 cattle, four oxen, 16 horses and 144 sheep. He had three leases and a mortgage worth £110.²⁸¹ George Storre, also yeoman, died in 1625 with goods valued at £117.19s.5d, including 17 cattle, six horses and 92 sheep.²⁸²

4.3 The Tenants

Less than 200 acres of the 1200 acres owned by Sir Christopher Hilyard and Lord Willoughby in Marshchapel was in the tenure of non-residents (Fig. 4.9). Only three tenants, Walter Harpham, Mr. Gering and Allan Storre, held more than 100 acres and, as we saw in the previous section, all three were also freeholders. Five Marshchapel parishioners, John Lyson or Leson, Thomas Nevell, Thomas Hagg, Robert Milles and Walter Storre, had tenancies of between 50 and 100 acres but none of the five held freehold land. Among the seven tenants who had holdings of between ten and 50 acres were Thomas and James Dawson, Julian Grant and Richard Wood, all of whom were also freeholders. There were a further three who held no freehold land in Marshchapel, namely, Bernard Crowston, Richard Nevell and a Mr. Ayscough of Fulstow. A further six local men, Robert Swaby, Richard Green, John Hobson, a Sergeant, a Wilson and a Marflet, held less than 10 acres. There were another six tenants, most of them from Fulstow, who held small parcels of land in Marshchapel. Once again, it should be remembered that only the tenants of the two lords of the manor were recorded in the field books. We know from other sources, chiefly probate documents, that some of the other freeholders leased their land to tenants. Some land was sublet, but the evidence is

²⁷⁹ LAO Inv 86/90, 1595, LAO LCC Wills 1595 i, 78.

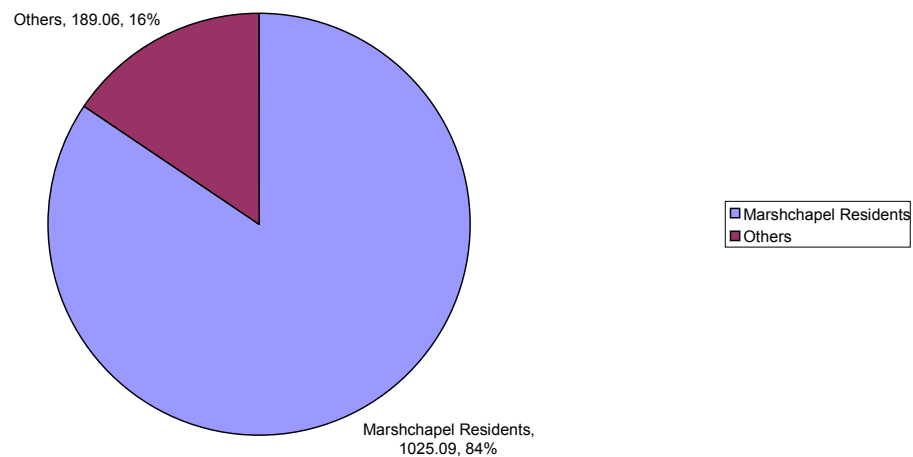
²⁸⁰ LAO Inv. 88/169, LAO LCC Wills 1597, 164.

²⁸¹ LAO Inv. 112a, 39, LAO LCC Wills 1612, 315.

²⁸² LAO Inv. 130/305.

more difficult to detect. Before exploring the economic status of the tenants, it is relevant here to consider the terms on which they held their land.

Figure 4.9 Percentage of land in Marshchapel held of the two lords of the manor by residents compared to that held by outsiders in 1595.



According to an inscription on the map on 1595, ‘The whole demesne of both the saide manors are let out by lease to divers tenauntes and no partes thereof holden by Copie of Court Roll’. That this had not always been the case is clear from evidence drawn from earlier probate documents. In 1539 John Dawson bequeathed to Margery, his wife ‘my copy of Wragholme pasture and ---grounde for the space of my yeres and after her then I wyll that Leonard my son have yt’.²⁸³ In 1547 Edmund Cowper surrendered ‘my copis in the hands of Robert Swyne and John Palmer tenants to my lady Duchess of Suffolk to the *hands* of Edmund Cowper my sonne according to the custom and the manor of the Lordship of Fulstow’.²⁸⁴ As late as 1578 Robert Hobson, saltweller, left to his son, John, ‘my house that I now dwell in in Marshchappell and to his heres which house I hold by copie of courte rowle of the duches of Suffolk accordinge to the custom of the manor’.²⁸⁵ By 1594 Thomas Nevell still had copyhold land in North Cotes, which was part of the Duchy of Lancaster but his land in Marshchapel was held by lease.²⁸⁶ It appears that the change must have been effected in the intervening years. It is not clear how copyhold tenants were persuaded to sacrifice the security of tenure conferred by

²⁸³ LAO LCC Wills 1538-40, 320.

²⁸⁴ LAO LCC Wills 1547-9/83.

²⁸⁵ LAO LCC Wills 1578, 171.

²⁸⁶ LAO LCC Wills 1594 i, 21.

‘the custom of the manor’, especially those who held their land by copyhold of inheritance.²⁸⁷

The interests of the lords of the manor are more easily understood. In the later sixteenth century, as the population rose and agriculture became more profitable, there was a general movement amongst the aristocracy to exploit their lands more fully.²⁸⁸ New, more efficient methods of farming were adopted. Copyhold tenancies were, increasingly, replaced by leasehold agreements, making it easier to increase rents. The length of tenancies was usually a matter for negotiation, though leases of 21 years were common. A series of indentures, drawn up between 1587 and 1598 reveal the conditions of tenure under which some tenants of Lord Willoughby in Fulstow and Marshchapel held their land and seem to capture the process of change.²⁸⁹ That it should have been happening so close to the time of the 1595 survey may be more than a coincidence.

The earliest of these surviving indentures, dated 1587, describes the terms on which the brothers, Nicholas and Richard Gering, gents, take over the tenancy on the death of their father, Peter Gering, gent. It appears to be a copyhold indenture. The brothers had already paid ‘three score pounds’ for entry fine for the land which their father ‘helde or made clayme to houlde by copie of Courte Rolle from the sayde Lord Willoughby and his ancestors as customary landes of his manors of Fulstowe and Fulstow Marshe ...’. The new tenancy was to last for the natural life of the longest survivor of the brothers ‘in as large and ample a manner’ as their father had enjoyed. They were to pay annually £5.6s.4d. and ‘seven sisterns and a half sistern of salt’. The money was to be paid in two equal parts on the usual feast days of St. Michael the Archangel, 29th September, and the Annunciation of Our Lady, 25th March, but the salt was to be paid in one instalment on St. Michael’s feast day. If the rents were not paid within ten days of the due date, the landlord or his agent could take away *goods* and keep them until the debt was paid and, if it were 21 days late, then the agreement would be void. The tenants had to promise to maintain the property, including ditches and fences and the ‘seadikes, banks and drains and other matters of defence against the sea or other waters or overflowing when and as often as need shall require.’ They must promise to pay all duties, levies and charges owed to the queen and they must do all customary ‘suits and services’ at the Lord’s

²⁸⁷ Bowden, "Agricultural Prices, Farm Profits and Rents." P.675.

²⁸⁸ Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558 to 1641* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966).

²⁸⁹ LAO H7/1-13.

Courts annually. Lord Willoughby, or his agent, would have the right to inspect the property at any time and demand that any necessary repairs should be done within six months. Finally, the Gerings promised, ‘upon the reasonable request’ of Lord Willoughby, to hand over ‘all such copies, records of Courte Rolles and all other evidences, scrolls writings and minumentes whatsoever’ concerning the property. Lord Willoughby’s agent is named as ‘his welbeloved in Christ, Thomas Ayscough of Fulstow, gent, his true and lawfull attorney’.²⁹⁰

Ten years later the terms by which Lord Willoughby’s tenants were to hold their land had changed. Eleven of the 13 documents were dated 1st May 1597 and the terms of these indentures are similar to each other. They combine the new with the old, introducing the new 21 year leases whilst retaining the ancient boon work and heriots. Three of them involved inhabitants of Marshchapel, all of whom had recently acquired land. Thomas Marshall and Richard Wood or their wives had inherited land in 1594 from their father-in-law, Thomas Grant. Walter Harpham held land in tenure which had previously belonged to Allan Storre. Thomas Marshall’s lease was to last for 21 years. In return for his holding of 64 acres of pasture, 12 acres of meadow, 11 acres of arable and ‘the half of eight acres being two salt holmes’ he agreed to pay 45s. and 3½ sisterns of salt annually. He also owed boon work of four full days with two servants, a cart and a team of oxen and horses. He had to pay a heriot of 2d. an acre at the time of Lord Willoughby’s heir being made a knight and, also, at the marriage of his daughter. At Thomas Marshall’s death, his heir would have to pay a year’s rent and his best live beast as entry fine.²⁹¹ Richard Wood’s lease was similarly for 21 years. His holding included a messuage or tenement with a cottage and other buildings belonging to it with 14 acres three roods and 11 poles of pasture, eight acres one rood of meadow, 17 acres eight poles of arable ‘and two salt ----- lying within the several fields of Marshchapel’. He had to pay 34s. annually and owed boon work and heriot in similar measure to Thomas Marshall.²⁹²

The terms of Walter Harpham’s lease were substantially the same as those above. His was also for 21 years and included ‘six cottages and one toftstead wasted with all and everie the howses, edifices, buyldings, yurds, orchards and gardens with all the lande,

²⁹⁰ LAO H7/1.

²⁹¹ LAO H7/5.

²⁹² LAO H7/10.

meadow and pasture, feedinge, commons, commodities and all and singular their appurtenances ... within the town fields and territories of Fulstow and Fulstow Marsh'. Although this property was 'now or late in the hands of the said Walter Harpham' he was to hold it 'in as large and ample a manner as one Allan Storr ... occupied or used the same'. He was to pay an annual rent of £5.9s. and one sistrin of salt. Like the other tenants, he was to provide two days boon work annually and 2d. an acre at the knighthood of Lord Willoughby's heir and the marriage of his daughter. Unlike the other tenants he agreed to give to Lord Willoughby, within one year of the signing of the indenture, one horse to the value of £10 and Lord Willoughby undertook to require no further heriot for the duration of the lease.²⁹³

Table 4.3 lists the land holdings of Marshchapel residents in 1595 according to the information provided in the field book. It should be remembered that the field book records land held in tenure only from the two lords of the manor, Lord Peregrine Willoughby and Sir Christopher Hilyard. We have seen evidence that land held by other freeholders, including Mr Gering, Mr Slanee and Mr Joliffe, was let to Marshchapel residents and, also, that some land was sublet. Walter Harpham's was the largest tenancy in Marshchapel. It included 308 acres of land, three tenements, two messuages, one cottage, five salt cotes and a windmill which together with his freehold land made him by far the largest landholder in the parish. Mr Gering held 146 acres, two tenements, two messuages and two salt cotes in tenure, a little more than Allan Storre who had held 122 acres with two tenements, one messuage and two cottages, possibly the land by Walter Harpham in 1597. It has already been observed that Mr Gering was not resident in Marshchapel and it seems unlikely that he was working the salterns associated with the salt cotes himself. As is demonstrated below, he was certainly subletting some land in Marshchapel to John and Richard Nevell in the 1590s and perhaps this included his salterns.

Amongst the tenants with holdings of between 50 and 100 acres was Robert Milles, another of the sons-in-law of Thomas Grant, with nearly 88 acres. There was Walter, another member of the Storre family, with 63 acres. The remaining three, John Lyson, Thomas Nevell and Thomas Hagg, who held no freehold land are all of some interest as significant players in the social and economic life of sixteenth century Marshchapel. Of

²⁹³ LAO H7/5.

the six who held between ten and 50 acres only Bernard Crowston was not named also as a freeholder. There were another six tenants with less than ten acres, none of whom held any freehold land in Marshchapel in 1595.

Table 4.3 Landholdings of Marshchapel residents in 1595 in acres

Name	Freehold	In tenure of the two lords of the manor	Total
Harpham Walter	50	308.21	358.21
Storre Allan Heires	1	121.26	122.26
Leson John	0	88.81	88.81
Nevell Thomas	0	84.6	84.6
Hagg Thomas	0	83.24	83.24
Milles Robert	0	82.86	82.86
Storre Walter	0	62.68	62.68
Grant Julian	17.3	33.69	50.99
Dawson Thomas	24.25	12.5	36.75
Dawson James	0.5	35.74	36.24
Nevell Richard	0	36.24	36.24
Wood Richard	0	33.29	33.29
Crowston Bernard	0	26.77	26.77
Marshall Thomas	23.86	0	23.86
Grant Thomas Heires	22.03	0	22.03
Swaby Robert	0	9.42	9.42
Wood Sylvester	7	0	7
Wood Jane & Sylvester	6.75	0	6.75
Vicar	4.2	0	4.2
Smith	3.75	0	3.75
Storre Robert	3.75	0	3.75
Provest John	2.65	0	2.65
Sergeant	0	1.99	1.99
Dawson Edward	1.25	0	1.25
Wilson	0	1.14	1.14
Marflet	0	1.13	1.13
Green Richard	0	1.06	1.06
Dawson Robert, Heires	1	0	1
South John	1	0	1
Wood Jane	1	0	1
Wood John	1	0	1
Holland Edward	0.75	0	0.75
Hobson John	0	0.46	0.46
Campion William	0.25	0	0.25
Gibson Simon	0.25	0	0.25
Total	173.54	1025.09	1198.63

The Lesons

In 1595, John Leson held the tenure of almost 89 acres with three tenements in Marshchapel and a little over 15 acres in Fulstow. There are only four entries in Marshchapel parish register relating to Leson or Lysons before 1650, all of them in the first decade of the seventeenth century. It has not been possible to connect them directly with this John Lyson though a blind John Leson was buried in 1604. If it were the same John, his disability may have contributed to what appears to be a decline of the family fortunes. There are two entries in 1603 recording the baptism and burial of Katherine, the bastard of Elizabeth Leson, and an entry in 1606 which records the marriage of Amy or Ana Leson to a Richard Vinder. But there is evidence of a John Leson in Marshchapel much earlier than this. In 1548 John Leson held the tenancy of a house and land belonging to Mr Broxholme.²⁹⁴ Throughout the 1540s and 1550s, and well into the 1560s, he was frequently called upon to appraise the goods of a neighbour after death. This was a task which usually fell to men who were respected and trusted by their peers and it placed him in such company as Walter Harpham, Arthur Washinglay and Thomas Grant, for example, whom we know to have been of some substance.²⁹⁵

The decline of the fortunes of this family continued into the next generation. It is worth noting that Arthur Lyson chose Arthur Washinglay and Thomas Grant as supervisors of his will and he left his children and their portions in the care of the same two men. He instructed that his debts should be paid out of his goods but, if that were not sufficient, money should be raised from his copyhold and lease. If there was no money left for his other two children, Jane and Robert, after the debts were paid, John was to pay £6.8s.4d. to his younger brother when he became of age. It appears that the prospects for Jane and Robert were not very promising and even their elder brother may have had to struggle to keep his tenancies intact.²⁹⁶ The Leson family had not prospered during the sixteenth century which might explain the disappearance of the family name from the parish register by the end of the first decade of the seventeenth century.

The Nevells

In 1595 Thomas Nevell held the tenancy of nearly 85 acres with one messuage and two salt cotes while Richard Nevell was the tenant of 36 acres with two salt cotes in

²⁹⁴ Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow."p.28.

²⁹⁵ LAO Inv. 41/250, LAO Inv. 41/252, LAO Inv. 42/121.

²⁹⁶ LAO Inv. 64/263, LAO LCC Wills 1580 ii, 52.

Marshchapel, as well as three acres in Fulstow. Nevells had been acting as appraisers for Marshchapel probate inventories at least since the 1560s. There are approximately 40 entries recording their presence from the date the register becomes legible until 1650. It has not yet been possible to establish with certainty that they were related to the Nevells of Faldingworth and thus to the Harphams. It is perhaps surprising that, having been resident so long, they left so few records amongst the Marshchapel documents.

John Nevell described himself as ‘yeoman’ when writing his will in 1590 though he was recorded as ‘husbandman’ in the parish register when he was buried a few days later. His wife had died two years earlier so he was able to leave much of his household goods to his four granddaughters. To Richard, his elder son, John bequeathed ‘All my interest of my farms leased of Sir Christopher Hilyard and Mr. Gering in Marshchapel’. The majority of the remainder of John’s goods were to be divided equally between Richard and his younger brother, Thomas.²⁹⁷ There was no reference in John’s will that could indicate any connection with salt making but his probate inventory suggests recent, active involvement. Amongst his other goods, his appraisers listed ‘four salt pans, the turfs in the holmes and moulde with the salt’ as well as three ‘mould bewells’. With goods valued at £80.7s.8d., he would not have been amongst the wealthiest of yeomen of his time but he had six oxen, 18 cattle, five horses and 32 sheep.²⁹⁸

It would be easy to jump to the conclusion that his two sons, Richard and Thomas, were the two who held the maures with the salt cotes from Sir Christopher in 1595, but this is not the case for Thomas had died in 1594. He seems to have been a colourful character and despite being the younger brother, he appears to have flourished. He had outlived two wives and was survived by two legitimate sons, John and Thomas; two daughters, Alice and Ann or Agnes; a step daughter, Joanne West; and two ‘base born’ sons, William and Augustus. His children were still young when he died. Thomas, the youngest, was not yet three years old. Walter Harpham was ‘to be the guardian and to have the only disposing of my children’. Agnes was later to marry Roger Harpham, a relative of Walter.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷ LAO LCC Wills, 1590, 268.

²⁹⁸ LAO Inv. 78/200.

²⁹⁹ LAO LCC Wills 1594 i, 21.

Unlike his brother, Thomas Nevell described himself as ‘husbandman’ in his will and, unlike his brother, he left sufficient wealth to merit the title ‘yeoman’. His goods were valued at approximately £260, three times those of his father a few years earlier. He owned eight oxen, 41 cattle, 16 horses and 76 sheep. The interest of his leases with ‘the commodities on the ground’ were valued at £30. Perhaps it was through marriage that he had acquired his copyhold land in North Cotes which he left to John. To little Thomas he left all his leases in Marshchapel, and it may have been his own experience of being a younger son that persuaded him to add ‘and so much of my other goods as will make him equal in value to his brother if my goods will extend to it’. Again, it is not clear how he acquired this land but it must have included the maures with two of the salt cotes which had been left to brother, Richard, and become part of the legacy of Thomas junior, who held them at the time of the survey in 1595. Salt making seems to have continued on this site at least until 1594. Listed amongst the goods of Thomas senior were two salt pans, ‘mould and turves’ valued at £18, ‘builes, hopes and harrowes soos & turf skeppes & salt skeppes with other implementes thereto belonging’ and ‘the crysle, barrow & shaftes with other implements in the coate’. Amongst other interesting items are the musket with ‘flax and tutchboxe’ valued at £1 and ‘the keele with tymbal thereto belonging’ worth £24.³⁰⁰

The Hagg

Thomas Hagg held 83 acres and one messuage in Marshchapel in 1595. There were 47 events associated with his family name in the parish register between 1588 and 1651 the majority being in the later years. There are few other documents relating to them but the earliest sources are the will and probate inventory of Thomas’s grandfather, also Thomas Hagg, who died in April 1563. He may have been a newcomer to the parish for he left legacies, amongst others, to the churches of Nettleham, Hainton, East and West Torrington as well as Fulstow and Lincoln Cathedral. He may have been related to the Harphams for he left the lease of a pasture called Scambilsby Marsh to Agnes Harpham, mother of Walter, so long as she remained a widow. To his son Bernard, Thomas left ‘20 ewes, 20 lambs, my best coat, my sword and the indenture that I have of Mr. Hilyard of the farm that I dwell in’ and he required that his supervisors ‘do keep him at school’. There were several other smaller legacies but the residue, after debts were paid, was to be divided amongst his four daughters ‘when they come of lawful age and

³⁰⁰ LAO Inv. 85/65. OED ‘timbal’ or ‘tymbal’ –Building material or wood for building,

discretion'. His debts were considerable at more than £40, but this should have left something for his daughters as he had four oxen, 36 cattle, eight horses and 103 sheep together valued at just over £70. It is apparent that these children were left orphans and there may have later been a problem with their 'portions' for the will appears to have been proved again in 1581. There is also a tantalising puzzle connected with the inventory. Does the entry that has been interpreted as 'the crystal gear with certain ashes' indicate Thomas's involvement in the salt making industry.³⁰¹

There was no sign of salt in Bernard Hagg's will or in his probate inventory when he died in November 1594. He left 6s.8d. to pay for his burial within the parish church next to his wife, who had died a few weeks earlier. He was described as 'yeoman' in the parish register and his goods were valued at £152.14s. He had 19 head of cattle, five horses and 132 sheep. The lease of the farm he held from Sir Christopher Hilyard, which he left to his son, Thomas, was valued at £16. His second son's legacy appears to have been his education, for Robert was to receive £10 'whereof £5 to be paid the Christmas next after my decease for the better procuring of his degree at the university and £5 within one year next after my decease.' Robert subsequently became a clergyman. By 1604, ten years after the death of his father, he was the schoolmaster in Marshchapel and by 1607 curate in the neighbouring parish of Grainthorpe.³⁰² His signature appears, followed by the word 'cleric' on the inventory of Walter Sergeant.³⁰³ Bernard bequeathed £16 to daughters Catherine, Elizabeth and Alice which they were to receive at marriage or when they became of age. Another daughter, Margaret, who may already have been married and been given her dowry, was to receive only £10. Bernard's youngest son and namesake was to have £20 and he was given to 'the government and disposing of my good friend Mr. Harpham'. Elizabeth was put into the care of Thomas Phillips, Walter Harpham's son-in-law, 'if he will do so much for me,' and Bernard appealed to Robert and Walter Storre 'either of them if they will stand so much my friends shall have my daughter, Alice'.³⁰⁴

So Bernard died just a few months too early to have his name recorded in the survey of 1595 and instead it was his son, Thomas, who held the lease of 83 acres and a messuage.

³⁰¹ LAO Inv. 42/121, LAO LCC Wills 1563-6, 49, LAO LCC Wills 1581, 99.

³⁰² Foster, ed., *The State of the Church in the Diocese of Lincoln*.p.426

³⁰³ LCC ADMON, 22 November 1608.

³⁰⁴ LAO Inv. 86/37, LAO LCC Wills 1595 i, 44.

Thomas lived for another 25 years, probably in the same house that his father had occupied. In each case there was a hall, a parlour, a kitchen, a brew house, a chamber and a milk house. Thomas Hagg, yeoman, seems to have prospered. He died leaving a lease of land from Sir Christopher Hilyard valued at £40 and some other part leases. He held bills and bonds worth £246.5s.4d. and the total value of his goods was assessed at £386.17s.6d. He had two oxen, 31 cattle, ten horses and 220 sheep. Perhaps his education had not been entirely neglected for he had two little bibles and a book.³⁰⁵ The Hagggs were another family which tended to favour a limited number of Christian names so that there were three Bernard Hagggs in the parish in 1641 when the Protestation Returns were recorded.

The Crowstons

Of the seven tenants with holdings of between ten and 50 acres the status of only Bernard Crowston and Mr. Ayscough remains to be explored. Bernard Crowston held nearly 27 acres and a tenement in 1595. Although there were nearly 40 entries relating to the Crowston family in the parish register between 1587 and 1650 and 14 probate inventories carrying a Crowston signature, there are very few other documents charting their presence in Marshchapel during this period. It can be seen from Robert Swabye's inventory of 1599 that he held the lease of a three acre meadow from Bernard Crowston.³⁰⁶ This seems to have been a family on the rise; perhaps a good marriage alliance helped. John Crowston, yeoman, left a will in 1650 in which he bequeathed to his eldest son, Bernard, 'half the farm in my possession provided he pay half the rent and other charges, also he *procure* another house to dwell in'. Apart from a few minor legacies, John's wife, Mary née Storre, was to have the residue, which presumably included the other half of the farm.³⁰⁷ Their son, Storre Crowston, was later to have the largest flock of sheep on the marsh of any farmer in the seventeenth century, and another Bernard Crowston, yeoman, of Marshchapel purchased land in Wragholme from Ellenour Browne of Louth and Nicholas and Mary Newcomen for £110, and John Crowston, yeoman, of North Cotes bought 16 acres also in Wragholme.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ LAO Inv. 123/305.

³⁰⁶ L.A.O. Inv. 92/94.

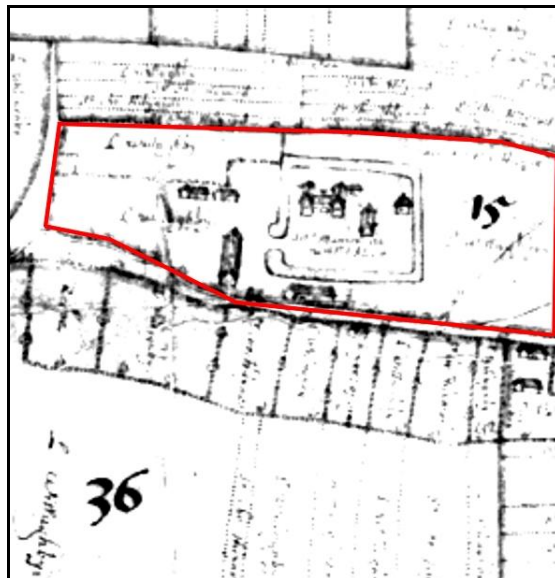
³⁰⁷ LAO LCC Wills 1650, 245.

³⁰⁸ Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*.p.152.

Thomas Ayscough

Lastly in this group of those who held between 10 and 50 acres is Mr. Ayscough, a member of the well known Lincolnshire family of that name. Thomas Ayscough, gent, was not a resident of Marshchapel as he lived at West Hall, the Willoughby manor house in Fulstow. He would have had some influence in Marshchapel, however, as Lord Willoughby's attorney.³⁰⁹ According to the field books, he held in tenure 24½ acres in Marshchapel and, with Thomas Wood, another 18 acres in Fulstow. However, an indenture drawn up in 1597 indicates that he held of Lord Willoughby alone, 'A messuage and tenement in Fulstow with a cottage belonging to the same together with fortie acres, one rood and thirty five poles of pasture lieing in severall places there, ten acres three roods and thirteen poles of medowe grounde together with fiftie five acres, three roods and two poles of arable land lieing within the severall fields of Fulstow'.³¹⁰ Listed in his probate inventory, drawn up in April 1607, were 25 acres of wheat and rye and 30 acres of beans, a total of 55 acres. At his death in 1607, the remaining 19 years of the lease of the parsonage was valued at £66.18.4d. The total value of his goods was £566.6.8d. but he had debts of over £400.³¹¹

Figure 4.10 West Hall, the Wiloughby manor house and home of Thomas Ayscough as depicted in Haiwarde's map, here outlined in red



³⁰⁹ LAO H7/1, LAO LCC Admons 1607, 71.

³¹⁰ LAO H7/11.

³¹¹ LAO LCC Admons 1607, 71.

The Swabyes, the Sergeants, the Marflets, the Wilsons and the Greens

Amongst those tenants who held less than ten acres are the Swabyes, the Sergeants, the Marflets, the Wilsons and the Greens. These five families are grouped together because they are all connected by marriage. They share a similar economic and social status as small farmers or husbandmen. Of these four, Robert Swabye's holding was the largest at just under ten acres and a tenement. There are 26 events relating to the name Swabye in the parish register between 1590 and 1649. The family had been in Marshchapel at least since the 1530s when William Swabye died leaving two sons, Charles and Robert, and a daughter, Agnes. Perhaps it was William's grandson, Robert, who held the land in 1595 and who died in February 1600. Robert Swabye, husbandman, had fathered at least six children but all had predeceased him. His wife and three of his children were buried in January 1600 and his daughter, Janet Wilson, and grandson, Thomas, were buried in February, just nine days before Robert's burial.

We saw in Chapter Three that winter 1599 to spring 1600 was a period of high mortality, which has been blamed on harvest failure. As Robert Swabye's goods were valued at £60, it seems unlikely that his family was suffering from starvation. He had two head of cattle valued at £27.6s.8d., a third part in a couple of oxen worth £1.13s.4d., three horses at £5.13s.4d. and 18 sheep at £5. To his son-in-law, George Wilson, and granddaughter, Isabell, who was just six years old, he left 'the lease that I have of Mr. Moigne and the three acre meadow that I have of Bernard Crowston'. The latter had two years to run and was valued at £2.13s.4d. In addition, he left to Arthur Swaybe 'the lease that I have of Christopher Hilyard', which was valued by his appraisers at £4. Robert Swabye's will has added poignancy as he bequeathed various items of women's clothing such as petticoats which had, presumably, belonged to his recently deceased wife. He also left a legacy to his brother's son 'if he is still living'.³¹²

By the terms of Robert Swabye's will, Walter Sergeant received 'one ewe and a hogg' and each of his five children was to have one ewe. It may have been Walter who was the tenant of just under two acres and a tenement in Marshchapel in 1595 and half an acre in Fulstow. His daughter, Eve, had married William Wilson in 1595 and another daughter had married a Marflet. Walter Sergeant, labourer, died in 1608 with goods

³¹² LAO Inv. 92/479, LAO LCC Wills 1599, 325.

valued at £10.16s.6d. in 1608.³¹³ Or it may have been Robert Sergeant, husbandman, who died in 1605 who was the tenant in 1595. There were 58 events relating to Sergeants in the Marshchapel parish register between 1590 and 1646 and among those whose status was given there was one husbandman, one shepherd and several labourers. They may have been in the parish for many decades but, being a family of modest means, there are no early probate documents and only two between 1600 and 1650.

There is a similar difficulty in attempting to identify which of the many Wilsons might have been the tenant of just over an acre and a tenement in Marshchapel. There are 60 events relating to the name Wilson recorded in the Marshchapel parish register between 1588 and 1651 but the family may have been established in the village well before that date. George Wilson, labourer, married Janet Swabye in 1593 and William Wilson, labourer, married Eve Sergeant in 1595. It was Thomas Wilson who was named as the tenant of a little less than 1½ acres in Fulstow and who may have held just over an acre in Marshchapel.

Thomas Wilson, salter, died in 1596 with nothing other than the entry in the parish register to connect him with the salt industry. He left goods to the value of £12, including three ‘kine’, one mare, three ewes and three wethers. The lease of his house was valued at 5s. Also amongst his possessions were six arrows and ‘a bill’, probably a bill hook. He left to his wife the lease of his house and after her death his son, Robert, should take the ‘lease of the Lord again at his cost and charge’. There were at least three other children, George, Thomas and Elizabeth to whom Thomas left small legacies.³¹⁴ The burials of three sons of a Thomas Wilson were recorded within weeks of Thomas’s death in September. John was buried in June and Christopher and Bernard just days after their father. Thomas must have known they were dying for he made no provision for them in his will. This was another year of high mortality, locally and in the country as a whole, often blamed upon poor harvest but, like the Swabys, the Wilsons were not without resources. Thomas’s surviving daughter, Elizabeth, married George Sherwyn in 1597 and by 1599, his son Robert had already begun to raise a family. There are 24 entries for the Green family in the parish register but none of them is Richard who held the tenancy of just over an acre. A Janet Wilson married a John Green in Marshchapel

³¹³ LAO LCC Admons 1609/136.

³¹⁴ LAO Inv 88/195, LAO LCC Wills 1597, 58.

in 1594. As a family of modest means, the Greens appear to have left no additional documentary evidence.

It is not clear which Marflet was the tenant of a small pasture of a little over an acre in Marshchapel but it was George Marflet who held 31½ acres in tenure in Fulstow and just less than an acre freehold. He was the same George Marflet of Fulstow who in 1597 held from Lord Willoughby: six acres of pasture; just less than three acres of meadow; 21 acres of arable land and one messuage or tenement with two tofts.³¹⁵ There were Marflets in Marshchapel; fifteen events relating to this family were recorded in the parish register between 1590 and 1628. The name had appeared amongst appraisers of probate inventories since the 1560s. When John Marflet the elder, salter, died in December 1590 his appraisers valued his belongings at £29.3s.4d. which did not take account of his debts which amounted to £12.12s.4d. He must have been an elderly man but he still had amongst his possessions ‘one horse wayne ... and a salt cart with all things thereto belonging’ valued at £3 and, at ‘the saltcote’, 14 strikes of salt worth £1. He owned cattle valued at £3.16s.8d., three mares worth £9 and two foals at £1.6s.8d. Further evidence of diversification were his ‘little croft house and all his fishing gear’.³¹⁶ John left to his wife, Beatrice, all his household goods and required that she should have lodgings ‘in one of the houses I now have so long as they may be had’. His executor was his son Robert, whose son, John, was given a ring. His daughter, Margaret had married Richard Nevell. She and her children, Richard and Thomas Nevell, also received small legacies. Richard Nevell, senior, with John’s brother, Walter, were appointed supervisors of the will. It must have been Robert, as executor, who acquired the salt cart and the salt but what happened to him subsequently has not been ascertained.³¹⁷

It is certain that John Marflet’s other sons did not follow him in his trade. Edmund Marflet, carpenter, had died in 1587 leaving small legacies to his young sons, Henry, William and Edmund. His brother, Robert, was executor of Edmund’s will. Edmund left the tools of his trade to his other brother, John. He also left to John his apprentice, Mark Dawson, who was to ‘serve him dutifully and truly during the time him and me specified in *our* pair of indentures’. In return ‘John Marflet, my brother, shall give unto

³¹⁵ LAO H7/4.

³¹⁶ LAO Inv 79/99.

³¹⁷ LAO LCC Wills 1591 i, 7.

Mark Dawson all such tools as his indenture doth specify and perform unto him all such covenants as I have promised before witnesses'.³¹⁸ When the same John Marflet, carpenter, died a bachelor in 1592, he willed that his tools and apparel should be sold and the proceeds shared between Edmund's sons when they became of age. The residue of his goods, if any after debts were discharged and funeral expenses paid, were to go to Robert, who was appointed executor.³¹⁹

The Hobsons

The last to be considered in this group of small tenants is the Hobson family for whom there were 11 events recorded in the Marshchapel parish register between 1597 and 1625. John Hobson held a tenement and garth of just less than half an acre from Lord Willoughby in 1595. The earliest date at which the Hobsons become visible in Marshchapel is in 1578 with the death of Robert Hobson. There is no evidence of his trade amongst his legacies but, in the preamble to his will, he proclaims himself a 'saltweller'. His goods were valued at £28.0s.6d. and, although he had debts amounting to £2.2s.6d., he was owed £5.0s.8d. To his youngest son, John, and to his heirs, he bequeathed 'the house that I now dwell in, in Marshchapel, ... which I hold by Copy of Court Roll of the Duchess of Suffolk according to the Custom of the Manor'. As John was his youngest son, this suggests that his two elder sons, Thomas and Bernard, had already been provided for. Daughter, Elizabeth, received some household goods and four cades and four lambs. Bernard's share of the livestock was four ewes, a yearling calf and a mare. Robert's hay stack, valued at 30s. was to be divided amongst his three younger children and his apparel between his two younger sons. The remaining goods, which were valued by his appraisers at £5.14s.4d., were to go to Thomas, his eldest son. They included a cow and a calf, four sheep and two lambs, a pig, a cart with its wheels and two ladders as well as some household goods. Thomas's sons, Arthur and Robert, each received a lamb.³²⁰

Thomas died five years later, by which time he had a third son, Thomas. Because his inventory is damaged it is not possible to give an accurate account of his wealth but he had, at least, six cows, six horses and 20 sheep and debts owing to him amounted to, at

³¹⁸ LAO LCC Wills 1587, 173.

³¹⁹ LAO LCC Wills 1592, 3.

³²⁰ LAO Inv 62/388, 1578, LAO LCC Wills 1578, 171.

least, £10 and suggest that he may have been a salter.³²¹ Barnard Hobson, salter of Ludney, who died in August 1591, was almost certainly Robert's son. His goods were valued at £35.19s. but he was also owed £43.15s.8d. His debts, which amounted to £22.19s., included to John Johnson of Warholme (now Wragholme) 17s.4d. for 13 strikes of salt and 26s.8d. for one sistern of salt. For 14 strikes of salt he owed John Lupton of North Cotes 17s.6d. and for dythes he owed him 6s. To the same John Lupton, he owed 30s. for rent unpaid.³²² The evidence seems to suggest that John Hobson, yeoman, who died in 1618, was Robert's brother. He appears to have been a bachelor or, at least, to have no direct heirs. He distributed his wealth widely and his will is particularly interesting for his many charitable gifts. He left £30 to be divided between Elizabeth, Mary and John Gayton, the children of his niece. He made provision for blind Thomas Hobson of Grainthorpe and the residue of his goods went to his nephew, John Hobson.³²³

4.4 Landless Labourers?

Two methods have been used in an attempt to quantify the proportion of parishioners not represented in the field book. In the first method the number of landholders named in the survey of 1595 were compared with population figures quoted in Chapter Three. In 1563, 94 households were recorded in Marshchapel; in 1595 there were 34 local land holders, just over one third of that number. Clearly these figures are not absolutely comparable and not only because they are 32 years apart at a time when the population appears to have been in decline. Some of the land holders may not have been heads of households and this applies particularly where several individuals shared the same surname, as in the case of the four Woods. Others, as tenants and subtenants of other than the two lords of the manor, would not be named in the field book.

The second method used family reconstitution to identify surnames of individuals and families resident in Marshchapel at that time. Names were chosen only if they appeared in the register in or before 1595 as well as after that date. In order to avoid including surnames of individuals who were not resident but who appeared in the register, for example because they had married a resident, names were added to the list only if they

³²¹ LAO Inv 68/64.

³²² LAO Inv 81/492, 1591.

³²³ LAO LCC Wills 1618 i, 127.

appeared three or more times before 1650. Sixty two surnames were identified in this way. Accuracy cannot be claimed for this figure; some surnames would be shared by more than one household and some families may have been overlooked but the final list should provide some indication of the proportion of residents who were not represented in the field book. Of the 62 surnames identified according to the criteria described above, 21 are mentioned in the field book as landowners or tenants leaving 41 unrepresented. The results obtained by the two methods are remarkably similar; they both indicate that about two thirds of heads of households were not named as landholders in the survey of 1595.

One advantage of the second method over the first is that it puts a name to many of those not mentioned in the field book. The status of individuals is occasionally recorded in the parish register and a little more frequently after 1600. At least one additional document, a will or a probate inventory, is available for 19 of the 41 surnames. Using information from these sources it has been possible to assess, in general terms but with some confidence, the status of all but eight of the individuals and families. There was one husbandman who must have had access to some land though this is not recorded in the field book. There were five salters, one saltweller, a butcher, a tailor, a shoemaker and two sailors. Twenty, one third of the total, could be positively identified as of labouring stock. The lack of documentary evidence to the contrary suggests the probability that the remaining eight belonged to the least advantaged groups in the parish, cottagers, labourers and the poor. It seems that at least one third of the population of Marshchapel may have been dependent on wage labour at the end of the sixteenth century. This figure is in line with that proposed by Everitt, who estimated that about 35% of people in marshland manors were dependent on wage labour in Tudor and Stuart times, and the numbers were growing in the seventeenth century.³²⁴ Of these, as individuals, we can learn little from the records but an attempt is made in Chapter Five to reveal something of the conditions of their lives.

4.5 Summary

Before considering what has been learnt so far about the socioeconomic structure of Marshchapel and how and why it changed between 1540 and 1640, it should be

³²⁴ Everitt, "Farm Labourers."pp.398-399.

acknowledged that in 1595 approximately 66% of the land in Marshchapel was part of the estates of the two lords of the manor, Lord Peregrine Willoughby and Sir Christopher Hilyard, whose lines of succession can be traced back to Domesday. A large proportion, if not all, of the other 34% had previously belonged to former religious houses, most of it to Louth Abbey. The death of the heirs of the Duke of Suffolk meant that his estates, which included the lands of Louth Abbey, were scattered amongst distant relatives. By what process they came into the hands of Mr Allington of Stanhope is not known. He may have been one of the distant relatives. John Guevara, the Spanish cousin of Katherine Willoughby, referred to George Allington as his cousin.³²⁵ There is evidence that the Broxholmes and the Bellows were involved in the acquisition of some former monastic lands in Marshchapel, possibly by purchasing them from the Court of Augmentations most of which they sold on for profit. Some parcels of land, which had belonged to former religious houses, remained in the hands of the Broxholme family in 1595. If it were possible to trace the process by which the Jolliffes and the Sacheverells, who sold to Mr Slanee, acquired their land, it might provide an insight into the full significance of the Dissolution in the change in land ownership in Marshchapel. There is clear evidence that land not in the hands of the lords of the manor was being bought and sold in this period. Only 10% of the land was owned by residents of the parish and most of that was in the hands of a small number of wealthy families and their relatives. It may have been the availability of former monastic land which had brought families such as the Harphams, the Nevells and, possibly, Arthur Washinglay and later the Grants to Marshchapel, thus contributing to the changing social structure.

Mr Allington and Mr Gering were Lincolnshire men but the evidence indicates that they were not farming the land they owned in Marshchapel, but letting it to local men. Mr Slanee and Mr Joliffe were both living in London, apparently, successful business men who had invested in land. They, too, were leasing their land to local farmers. There is no evidence that wealthy wolds farmers were acquiring land in Marshchapel to fatten their sheep, as some are said to have done in parts of the marshland towards the end of the seventeenth century.³²⁶ So far there is no evidence that partible inheritance was a major cause of the dispersal of holdings. At gentry and yeoman level, there may have

³²⁵ A R Maddison, *Lincolnshire Wills 1600-1617*.

³²⁶ Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*. p.150.

been an effort to acquire land to provide for younger sons but, generally, the eldest son inherited the bulk of the estate. Failure of the male line was more likely to lead to the break up of a holding, especially if there were two or more daughters. Arthur Washinglay was able to leave the bulk of his property to his one daughter whereas his son-in-law, Thomas Grant, split the estate between his seven daughters. The failure of the male line often meant that ownership went out of the parish as it did, also, in the case of the land of Walter Harpham and, later, of his son-in-law, Thomas Phillips.

Almost 174 acres, or just less than 10%, was shared between 21 inhabitants of Marshchapel. They, too, may have acquired their land through the services of such as John Broxholme, but this can only be conjecture. What is certain is that Walter Harpham held 50 acres, by far the largest share. Three others held 20 acres or more and the remaining 17 each owned between 7 acres and 0.25 acres. In many cases, these 17 were related to, at least, one of the four with larger holdings. Only 16% of the land belonging to the two lords of the manor was let to non-residents of Marshchapel. Though tenancy was more widely spread amongst Marshchapel residents than ownership, the majority of land was concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy families. With 500 acres in tenure, Walter Harpham held the lion's share.

Analysis of the field book has identified 33 residents who held land in the parish in 1595, a number which was estimated to represent about one third of the households in Marshchapel. This is not the whole story, firstly, because the field books name the tenants only of the two lords of the manor, secondly, because some land was sublet and, thirdly, some individuals may have held land elsewhere. However, the information that is available indicates that most of the land and, therefore, the wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few yeomen and minor gentry. Supporting evidence is found in probate inventories and wills. There was a huge disparity of wealth, even amongst those who have been identified as land holders. How much more true this would be if all the inhabitants of the parish were taken into account. In the next chapter, detailed analysis of the parish register and probate documents contribute to a more balanced picture of the economy and society of Marshchapel as the lives of some those whose names did not appear in the survey of 1595 are revealed.

Farmers and Fishermen

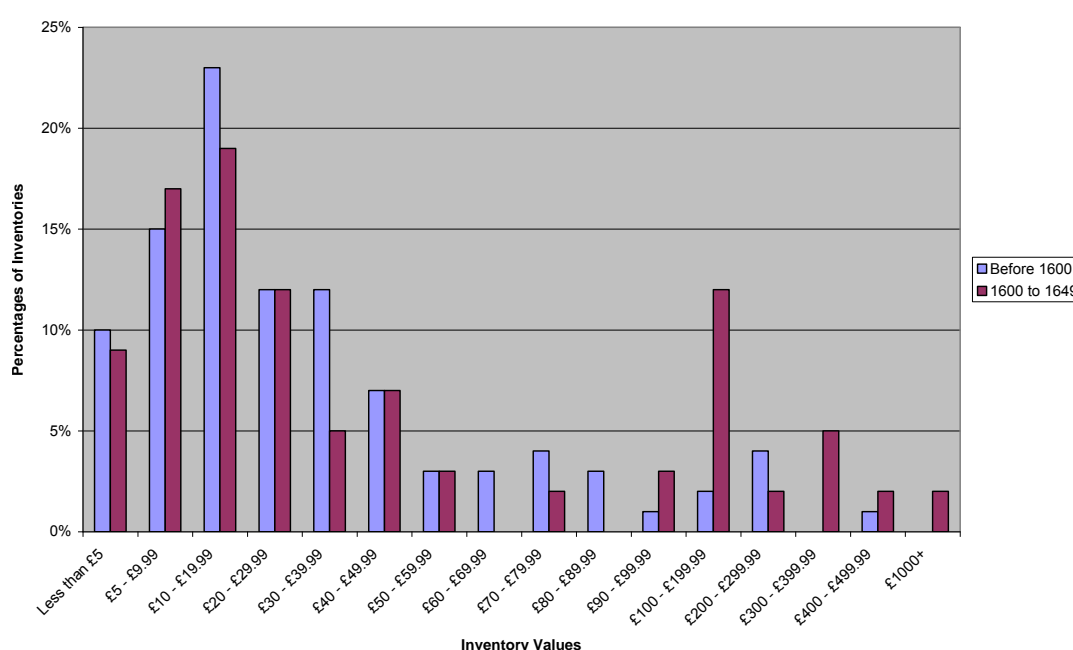
Analysis of the 1595 survey has identified all the major landholders in Marshchapel at the end of the sixteenth century. Evidence from other documents, chiefly the parish register, probate inventories and wills, put flesh on the bones of some of those individuals, and began to add breadth and depth to the emerging picture of the social and economic structure of the parish. However, the picture was limited in two main ways. Firstly, although it revealed detailed and valuable information about land holders which would have been impossible to obtain in any other way, it provided only a static picture, a snapshot of a moment in time. Secondly, the information it provided was confined to only the wealthier members of the community. In this chapter a more detailed analysis of probate documents and the parish register extends the study in three main ways. Firstly, the chief features of the economy from the first half of the sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century are explored in some detail, though it should be noted that the salt industry will be the subject of Chapter Six and will, therefore, receive only a passing reference in this chapter. Secondly, a more balanced view of the social and economic structure of the parish is constructed as some of those individuals are identified who were residents of Marshchapel in 1595 but whose names were not recorded in the survey. Thirdly, the interaction of the community with external processes of change is explored.

Probate documents are the chief source available to the historian in the study of the social and economic structure of a community but it must be remembered that they do not represent a true cross section of society. We have already seen that those surviving inventories for Marshchapel represent fewer than 39% of adult males and 3% of adult females who were buried between 1590 and 1650. The poor, in particular, were under-represented. Figure 5.1 compares, in percentages, the range of values of the 100 inventories of the sixteenth century in which the total could be discerned with those 58 inventories from the first half of the seventeenth century. Some increase in overall values could be expected as a result of the inflation which was a feature of this period.³²⁷ Perhaps the number of inventories is too small to draw other firm conclusions but there appears to be some evidence of polarisation after 1600 with proportionately

³²⁷ Peter Bowden, "Agricultural Prices, Farm Profits and Rents," in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1500-1640*, ed. Joan Thirsk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967). pp.594-596.

fewer inventories in the middle ranges. Before 1600, 60% of inventories were valued below £30, there were 33% between £30 and £99 and 7% at £100 or more. After 1600 57% inventories were valued at below £30, there were 20% between £30 and £99 and 23% valued at £100 or more. Only one inventory out of a total of 100 was valued at more than £300 before 1600 compared with five out of the 58 above that figure in the first half of the seventeenth century

Figure 5.1 Comparison of Marshchapel inventory values before and after 1600



In many cases when drawing up inventories of the possessions of deceased neighbours, as they did in the north Lincolnshire parishes of Clee and Barnetby, the appraisers would begin indoors, in a larger house moving from room to room, listing the household goods before going out into the yard and the fields.³²⁸ This process was usually reversed in Marshchapel, where the appraisers frequently began by listing the animals: firstly the cattle, then the oxen, the horses, the sheep, the pigs and, lastly, the poultry or in a very few inventories, the bees. They often went on to list the crops on the ground or in store and the goods associated with any other economic activity in which

³²⁸ R.W. Ambler and B.& L. Watkinson, eds., *Farmers and Fishermen. The Probate Inventories of the Ancient Parish of Clee, South Humberside 1536 - 1742.*, *Studies in Regional and Local History* (Hull: School of Adult and Continuing Education University of Hull., 1987), Neil Wilkin and Barnetby W.E.A., *All Things Forgotten: Village Life in Barnetby in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (W.E.A Barnetby Branch, 1999).

the deceased had been involved, before turning their attention to the household goods.

When considering wealth from agriculture and other seasonal activities it should be remembered that each inventory provides only a snapshot reflecting a particular time of year. It should also be borne in mind that an older man may have retired from active involvement in farming so that his inventory may not reflect his true social and economic status. The majority of those who have left probate inventories were involved in agriculture to a greater or lesser extent, including those who were credited with another craft or trade. This may give the impression that all craftsmen and tradesmen had dual occupation, but it could mean that only those artisans with more than one iron in the fire had sufficient wealth to warrant a probate inventory.

5.1 Agriculture

Livestock

As the emphasis in Marshchapel was on pastoral farming, it is appropriate to begin this study of agriculture, like the appraisers, by looking at the wealth contained in livestock. Table 5.1(a) shows figures for animal ownership extracted from inventories dated from 1533 to 1599 and Table 5.3(b) shows similar figures from 1600 to 1649. It was common for households to have at least one cow to provide for the needs of the family. Even if they could not afford meat, they could have milk, butter and cheese. Any spare milk could be sold or used to feed the pig. Only 7% of the sixteenth century inventories recorded the goods of individuals who had no cattle at all and yet beef is mentioned in only two, both inventories belonging to salters, those middle men who bought and sold salt rather than those who made it.³²⁹ Some of those with no cattle may have been elderly, perhaps living in lodgings or dependent for their care upon others. The figure for those who had not even a single cow had risen to 18% in the first half of the seventeenth century, which may indicate that an increasing number of households were experiencing hardship. The figures for those owning between one and five cattle and between six and ten follow the same trend so that, in the first half of the seventeenth century, 71% owned no more than ten cattle compared to approximately 52% in the sixteenth century. In 1607 Walter Harpham was credited with over 200, at least 50 more

³²⁹ L.A.O. Inv. 79/99, LAO Inv 49/267.

than any other Marshchapel farmer before 1650.³³⁰

Table 5.1(a) Numbers of animals in inventories in Marshchapel 1533 to 1599

Numbers of Animals	Numbers and percentages of inventories			
	Cattle	Sheep	Horses	Pigs
Unspecified	3	4	2	9
0	7(7%)	29(29%)	26(26%)	26(30%)
1 to 5	29(29%)	12(12%)	49(49%)	50(54%)
6 to 10	16(16%)	10(10%)	17(17%)	12(12%)
11 to 20	23(23%)	11(11%)	8(8%)	5(5%)
21 to 30	14(14%)	5(5%)		
31 to 40	7(7%)	6(6%)		
41 to 50	3(3%)	3(3%)		
51 to 80		5(5%)		
81 to 100		5(5%)		
101 to 150		7(7%)		
151 to 200		4(4%)		
201 to 250		1(1%)		
Nos. of Inventories	99	98	100	93

Table 5.1(b) Numbers of animals in Marshchapel inventories 1600 to 1649.

Numbers of Animals	Numbers and percentages of Inventories			
	Cattle	Sheep	Horses	Pigs
Unspecified	2	2	1	3
0	10(18%)	27(47%)	27(46%)	20(35%)
1 to 5	21(38%)	7(12%)	27(46%)	36(63%)
6 to 10	8(15%)	3(5%)	2(3%)	1(2%)
11 to 20	8(15%)	7(12%)	2(3%)	
21 to 30	7(13%)	1(2%)		
31 to 40	1(2%)	2(3%)	1(2%)	
41 to 50		1(2%)		
51 to 80		2(3%)		
81 to 100		1(2%)		
101 to 150		1(2%)		
151 to 200		3(5%)		
201 to 250	1(2%)	2(3%)		
251 to 300				
301 to 350		1(2%)		
Nos of Inventories	58	58	59	57

Although there is no evidence in the Marshchapel documents of the droving of cattle, it seems likely that farmers such as Walter Harpham, who had large herds, were sending cattle to market in that way. They had access to markets at Louth and Grimsby and

³³⁰ LAO Inv. 102/252.

further afield by way of the Humber and the Trent. It was said that turnpikes developed on the roads leading into London because of the damage caused by the great numbers of heavy cattle being driven to London from Lincolnshire and the fens of Ely.³³¹ One example of documentary evidence of sheep being driven from Marshchapel to London in the later seventeenth century is quoted below.

Sheep fattening had played an important role in the economy of the Lincolnshire marshland since the twelfth century. The evidence in Marshchapel inventories of the presence of ewes and lambs indicates that Marshchapel farmers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were also engaged in the breeding and rearing of sheep. The primary role of the sheep would have been to produce wool; good quality meat would not be found in the same animal. 'Fatt' sheep, which may have been intended for the butcher or for household consumption, feature occasionally in the inventories of some wealthier Marshchapel deceased.³³² John Lupton, who had apparently been a butcher, at his death in 1639 had, in his shop, four sheep as well as a cleaver and a block 'with other necessities belonging to the said shop'.³³³ However, describing the food of Lindsey in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Eileen Elder declared that, while it was a well known fact that men who 'lived in' tired of eating mutton, there was little evidence of mutton being eaten by the cottager.³³⁴

As yet, there has been no detailed study of the Lincolnshire woollen industry but there is no doubt that Lindsey wool was particularly highly regarded for its quality and price. In the Middle Ages, raw wool was sent from Lincolnshire to the manufacturing centres of Flanders and Northern Italy. At the beginning of the sixteenth century raw wool was still being taken out from some of the havens on the Lindsey coast to meet the larger vessels that sailed from Boston to Calais. By the mid-sixteenth century, the international demand for English raw wool had declined. However, the tax on the export of raw wool and the demands of the expanding home population had encouraged the growth of the

³³¹ G E Mingay, "The East Midlands: Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire (excluding the Fenland)," in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales Part 1 1640-1750 Regional Farming Systems*, ed. Joan Thirsk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). P.90.

³³² LAO Inv. 85/126, LAO Inv. 86/37.

³³³ LAO Inv 150B/392.

³³⁴ Eileen Elder, *Lincolnshire Country Food* (Scunthorpe Borough Museum, 1985). p.10.

domestic textile industry.³³⁵ The long wool sheep has sometimes been given the credit for the success of the Lincolnshire wool trade in the Middle Ages. This sheep was particularly suited to the marshland: it was a hardy animal and the long wool protected it from exposure on the outer marsh while its large size enabled it to avoid foot rot.³³⁶ As its name suggests, the fleece of the Lincolnshire long wool was longer and it was also heavier, usually weighing anything over 4lbs compared to the short wool fleece, which might weigh as little as 1lb.³³⁷ In 1956 Dr Bowden questioned the assumption that the long wool sheep had been a feature of Lincolnshire farming since the early Middle Ages and yet it continues to be restated without question to the present day.³³⁸ He maintained that there was little evidence of the long wool in England before the late sixteenth century. It has been suggested recently that the lack of the long wool sheep in England contributed to the decline of the export industry in the later Middle Ages. It had meant that wool yields were relatively small and, therefore, more costly to produce than the wool of some foreign competitors in the market.³³⁹

There is no evidence in the documents studied in preparing this thesis that the Marshchapel farmers were rearing Lincolnshire long wool sheep before 1650. Wool ‘cards’, which are associated with the processing of the shorter wool, are listed in some inventories but wool ‘combs’, which would have been needed for the longer wool, do not appear. The overall trend of sheep ownership in Marshchapel at the turn of the sixteenth century is similar to that of cattle, showing further evidence of the growing gap between rich and poor. Before 1600, 30% of those leaving inventories had no sheep, whereas that figure had risen to 47% for the first half of the seventeenth century. At the upper end, the largest flock of sheep recorded in inventories of sixteenth century Marshchapel was fewer than 250, and that was exceptional. The size of flocks owned by wealthy local farmers continued to increase throughout the seventeenth century. By 1650 the largest flock recorded was over 300. When he died in October 1692, Storr

³³⁵ J.A. Perkins, "Sheep Farming in 18th and 19th Century Lincolnshire.," *Occasional Papers in Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*. 4 (1977).pp.6-8, Adrian Bell, Chris Brooks, and Paul Dryburgh, *The English Wool Market, c1230-1327* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).pp.60-63.

³³⁶ S. Pawley, "Maritime Trade and Fishing, 1500-1700," in *An Historical Atlas of Lincolnshire.*, ed. N. Bennet and S. Bennet (Phillimore, 2001).pp.56-59. Perkins, "Sheep Farming in 18th and 19th Century Lincolnshire.."pp.6-8.

³³⁷ P.J. Bowden, "Wool Supply and the Woollen Industry," *Economic History Review New Series* (1956). pp.44-58.

³³⁸ Ibid, Richard Gurnham, *A History of Louth* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2007).p.21. Perkins, "Sheep Farming in 18th and 19th Century Lincolnshire.."

³³⁹ Bell, Brooks, and Dryburgh, *The English Wool Market, c1230-1327*.p.151.

Crowston of Marshchapel left a flock of 632 sheep, 40 of which had 'gone to London'.³⁴⁰ In the capital, it seems, people did eat mutton. The success of the textile industry fuelled the demand for wool which, in turn, encouraged those with the means to acquire more pasture land on which to feed their flocks, creating a lively market in which the smaller farmer could not compete. In Skegness, in the 1630s, sheep were bought in spring for £8 a score, fed on the marshes throughout the summer, and sold off in the autumn for £14 a score. By the end of the century, the Lincolnshire long wool may have made its appearance. On the marshland there was, 'A great stock of large sheep, which yield a very lusty wool, or of a large staple (as here phrased), three or four fleeces usually making a tod of 28 pounds.' Great quantities of fleeces were exported out of the county, much of it to be manufactured in Norfolk and Suffolk.³⁴¹

Oxen were the animals most commonly used to pull the plough in medieval England. The horse was favoured for hauling and harrowing and for its greater speed, stamina and longer life. It could be used more safely on stony ground where the ox might slip, but the ox was more efficient on heavy ground. Horses were cheaper to buy but more expensive to keep than oxen: they consumed more food and cost more to maintain. Depreciation was another factor; a horse is worth little when it becomes old but an ox might be sold for food for as much as it was worth in its prime. Horses were more versatile: they could pull a cart, they could be ridden and they could be used as pack animals. Horses were gradually replacing oxen in the early modern period. In Marshchapel, as in some other parts of the country, the smaller peasant farmer was moving over to horses more rapidly than the wealthier landholder. He could buy an old horse cheaply. It would be more convenient for ploughing smaller plots of land and it could also be used for pulling a cart. A further advantage was that the smaller farmer could remain independent rather than having to team up with a neighbour.³⁴²

Few oxen remained in Marshchapel by the middle of the seventeenth century. Before 1600, 37% of Marshchapel inventories included oxen and that figure fell to 8% for the following 50 years. Amongst the eight owners of oxen who left inventories before 1550,

³⁴⁰ Joan Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Methuen, 1957).p.152. LAO Inv 190/36.LAO Inv 190/36.

³⁴¹ Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*.p152.

³⁴² John Langdon, "The Economics of Horses and Oxen in Medieval England.," *Agricultural History Review* 30, no. Part 1 (1982).pp.31-41.

six had owned four oxen and two had owned six. In the 1550s and 1560s, whilst the number of inventories which included oxen remained at 50%, the number held by each individual was usually only two, only the wealthiest owned a team of four or more. Fifteen inventories recorded two each, one included four, two mentioned six and one recorded eight. In the following decades ownership of oxen became increasingly rare and confined to the wealthy who usually held teams of at least four. There were a few exceptions, including Robert Swabye whose goods, valued at £60 in 1599, included a 'third part of a coppull of oxen' valued at £1.13s.4d³⁴³ Thomas Dawson's inventory lends support to the theory that an old ox could be fattened for the butcher and retain its value when it could no longer pull the plough. When he died in 1588, he left five fat oxen valued at £20 and five draft oxen worth £12.³⁴⁴

There was a growing demand for horses as the seventeenth century progressed because of the rising population, nationally, and because they were used for a wider variety of purposes. Horses were used increasingly in trade and industry as motive power. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, wealthier farmers began to acquire horses for riding and for pulling their coaches. For the upper classes, a fine horse became a status symbol and good horsemanship the essential quality of a gentleman.³⁴⁵ In spite of the wider use of horses and the decrease in the number of Marshchapel inventories which included oxen, the percentage of inventories in which horses appeared also decreased over the period. Before 1600, 74% of inventories included at least one horse compared to only 54% in the first half of the seventeenth century. Where there was only one horse it was usually a mare, which would be favoured to allow for breeding, for replacement or for sale. The one mare was often accompanied by a foal. It was at this level that there were fewer inventories which included a horse, meanwhile the number of horses owned by wealthier farmers increased. No individual was recorded as owning more than 20 horses before the turn of the century but, in 1607, Walter Harpham had four nags, three colts, six foals, ten mares, seven fillies, 'two young stoned horses and one ridden gelding', all 33 together valued at £117.10s.³⁴⁶ He was breeding horses on a larger scale and 'bringing them on'; possibly some of them were destined for the horse fair at

³⁴³ LAO Inv. 92/479.

³⁴⁴ LAO Inv. 75/235.

³⁴⁵ P.R. Edwards, "The Horse Trade of the Midlands in the 17th. Century," *Agricultural History Review* 27 (1979), Peter Edwards, *Horse and Man in Early Modern England* (New York: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), pp.1-3.

³⁴⁶ LAO Inv. 102/252.

Louth.³⁴⁷ His horses must have had a good reputation for Lord Willoughby chose to have one of Walter's horses to the value of £10 instead of heriot for the term of the lease of 21 years.³⁴⁸

Though there was a swine market in Louth, pigs were not farmed on a grand scale in Marshchapel but many households had a few to provide for home consumption.³⁴⁹ Bacon flitches appear frequently in inventories amongst the goods in store. Pigs were most commonly listed in ones and twos. Of the 167 inventories before 1650, 24 included between five and ten pigs and only six included more than ten, though Thomas Maddison left 20 swine in 1588.³⁵⁰ The average price of a pig in the inventories increased from just under 1s in the first half of the sixteenth century to about 8s in the following 100 years. Again, after the turn of the century the number of inventories in which pigs did not feature had increased from 26% to 35% and those including fewer than five from 84% to 98%.

Figure 5.2 illustrates how appraisers' valuations of livestock were rising providing evidence of a contributory factor to the growing gap between the rich and poor of Marshchapel in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There are some problems which must be borne in mind when attempting to calculate prices from probate inventories. Firstly, the appraisers' valuation of individual animals is not always clear and, secondly, the quality would have varied and affected the valuation. In the case of cattle, in order to compare, as far as possible, like with like and because they appeared most often, only cows were selected. Even within this limitation, the cows would differ in age, size and health, all of which would affect value. In the case of sheep, all were treated as sheep. Whether they were tups, ewes, lambs, wethers or hogs, or whether they were old or fat, they were included so long as the price was clear. Horses are represented by mares as they appear most frequently. Oxen were less problematical and all were included whether 'fat' or 'draft'. Another weakness with the figures is that some are drawn from very few inventories and this can account for some of the blips in the overall trend, for example, in the case of the mares in the 1620s. In spite of the problems, the story the

³⁴⁷ Alan Everitt, "The Marketting of Agricultural Produce," in *The Agricultural History Of England and Wales 1500-1640*, ed. Joan Thirsk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).p.590.

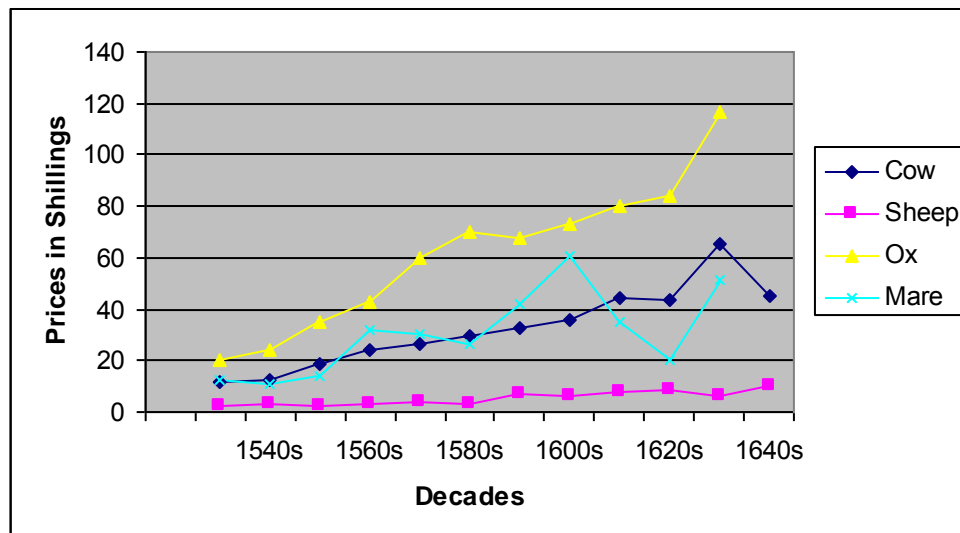
³⁴⁸ LAO H7/13.

³⁴⁹ Everitt, "The Marketting of Agricultural Produce."p.591.

³⁵⁰ LAO LCC Admons 1581-9, 884.

figures tell is a consistent one. The price of livestock increased, approximately, by a factor of five during this period. Labourers' wages also increased but not enough to keep pace with the rise in prices. It has been estimated that between 1450 and 1650 the daily wage of agricultural labourers rose from 4d. to 1s. but this was not sufficient to keep pace with inflation. By the middle of the seventeenth century the labourer's wage had fallen to 44% of the level it had been in the second half of the fifteenth century.³⁵¹ This would have put the ownership of even one cow, sheep or horse out of the reach of an increasing proportion of the population.

Figure 5.2 Average valuation of livestock in Marshchapel inventories before 1650 by decade



In her recent study of food in early modern England, Joan Thirsk claims that, in 1500, hens and chickens were 'seen in every yard, on roadsides, and in fields, and valued most of all for their eggs'. Ducks and other waterfowl, on the other hand 'were regarded with suspicion because they fed on frogs and worms and were not deemed healthy food', though attitudes did change as the demand for meat grew with the rising population.³⁵² About 70% of Marshchapel inventories before 1650 included some poultry, usually a cock and a few hens, but ducks and geese appeared occasionally. A road to the west of Marshchapel is still known as Duckthorpe Lane, as it was in 1595. Where numbers of poultry were provided before 1600, only four included more than ten whilst 22 was the

³⁵¹ Bowden, "Agricultural Prices, Farm Profits and Rents." pp.599-600.

³⁵² Joan Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England: Phases, Fads, Fashions 1500-1760* (New York: Hambledon Continuum, 2007). pp.250-251.

greatest number ascribed to one individual. After 1600, fewer than 27% of the inventories included poultry and precise numbers were rarely provided. This might indicate that appraisers no longer bothered to record them, but it could be further evidence of a lowering of the standard of living for some sections of the community.

It is possible that there was a tendency to be less conscientious about recording a few hens which might have to be searched out; bee hives must have been easier to track down, yet they are mentioned in only seven inventories. Sugar appeared in England in the sixteenth century but it is unlikely to have become readily available in Lincolnshire much earlier than the mid-seventeenth century.³⁵³ Honey would have been in demand as a sweetener and bees would not be expensive to keep and so should have been available to the majority. It is possible that sources of wild honey were utilised. Perhaps the marsh environment did not lend itself to bee keeping. In two cases it is possible to identify the place of residence of the bee keeper with some confidence. The home of Walter Harpham, who died in 1607 leaving stocks of bees worth 8s.4d., was close to the church on the corner of what is now known as Harpham's Way and John Addyson, wheelwright and alehouse keeper, who died in 1613 left bees worth 13s.4d. and a lease of Marshchapel vicarage next to the church.³⁵⁴ Both these houses were situated on the landward side of Seadyke Way in a relatively sheltered spot, a position more favourable to bee keeping than the open marshes.

Arable farming

Though elsewhere in the country the thriving textile industry had encouraged farmers to convert arable land to pastoral, there is no evidence that this was the case in Marshchapel, nor is it likely to have been necessary. The land to the east of Seadyke Way, as it gradually became available over the centuries, had never been part of the communal field system. We saw in Chapter Two that approximately 88% of Marshchapel was pasture or meadow land at the time of the 1595 survey and, apart from the 600 acres which had been reclaimed in the first half of the seventeenth century, there was little change by the time of the nineteenth century Parliamentary enclosure.³⁵⁵ More is known about the 2000 acres drained in North Somercotes in the 1630s, which was

³⁵³ Ibid.p.324-325.

³⁵⁴ LAO Inv. 102/252, LAO LCC Admons 1613/230.

³⁵⁵ Rex Russell and Eleanor Russell, *Making New Landscapes in Lincolnshire: The Enclosure of Thirty Four Parishes in Mid Lindsey.*, *Lincolnshire History Series 5* (Lincoln: Lincolnshire Recreational Services, 1983).p.72.

largely turned to arable farming.³⁵⁶ Though pasture for sheep was in great demand, it was essential to maintain a balance between arable and pastoral to ensure the supply of winter fodder for livestock and for food for the table. In 1595, only about 9% of the land in Marshchapel was given to arable farming though, as some Marshchapel landholders also held land in Fulstow, where approximately 45% was arable, the combined balance of individual holdings may show an increased proportion of arable land. Walter Harpham, for example, held just less than ten acres of arable in Fulstow, only two acres in meadow and grass and none in pasture. Joan Thirsk pointed out that, as the marshland region of Lincolnshire was already established in the sixteenth century as a rearing and feeding district, it might be assumed that the proportion of land under crops and grass was reasonably well adjusted to this type of husbandry.³⁵⁷ It would have been essential to maintain that balance as the size of flocks increased.

Table 5.2 Frequency of occurrence of crops in Marshchapel inventories 1533 to 1649

Crop	Number of inventories	
	On the ground	In store
Corn	11	19
Wheat	3	11
Rye	0	1
Oats	1	2
Barley	8	14
Beans	9	14
Peas	0	2
Lentils	1	0
Flax	3	1
Hemp	2	3

Information concerning acreages, quantities and prices of crops grown is scant in the probate inventories but Table 5.2 gives an indication of the crops grown and their relative importance in the local economy. Crops on the ground or in store appear in some inventories but often in such a way that quantity and valuation are not clear. Conclusions drawn from the few figures that are available must, therefore, be treated with caution. Corn occupied an important place in the farming economy on the marshland and the soil was particularly suited to the growing of wheat which elsewhere

³⁵⁶ TNA SP16/302.

³⁵⁷ Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*. p.154.

might have been considered a luxury crop.³⁵⁸ The less affluent may have eaten ‘maslin’, bread made from varying combinations of two or more grains, usually including wheat, oats or rye and sometimes barley. It was said that the wheat gave the bread strength, the barley sweetness and the rye kept it sound for weeks.³⁵⁹ According to Fynes Morrison writing in 1600, in some areas the labourers ate maslin because it ‘abode longer in the stomach and was not so soon digested’.³⁶⁰

In the Marshchapel inventories it was unusual for corn to be differentiated by type. From the 162 extant inventories drawn up before 1650, it was possible to identify 53 acres of corn and three acres of wheat being grown, mostly in small parcels of up to four acres. The figure for corn was inflated by the 20 acres owned by Thomas Nevell, and valued at £10 when his goods were appraised in July 1594.³⁶¹ In December of the same year, Bernard Hagg had corn in store worth £13.6s.8d.³⁶² It must be safe to assume that these two men were growing corn for the market. After the cereals, next in importance were the barley and beans, the essential fodder crops, though barley was also needed for brewing. Items relating to brewing appear in approximately 16% of Marshchapel inventories for the period. It was possible to identify 21 acres of barley and 16 acres of beans and an additional nine and a half acres of barley with beans and half an acre of barley with lentils. The probate inventory of Thomas Lacon, gentleman of neighbouring Tetney, is more revealing. When he died in April 1615, he left ‘50 quarters of barley sold and sent away by keel to the market’ valued at £60. He also had, in the ‘upper grange chamber laithe’ all of them ‘threshed and unthreshed’, £80 worth of wheat, £80 worth of beans, and another £20 worth of barley and, in the ‘garner chamber’, a further ‘11 quarters of barley and 3 quarters of oats’ together valued at £12. In the ground, he had 40 acres each of wheat, beans and barley, together valued at £20.³⁶³

The evidence in the Marshchapel inventories is insufficient to be able to detect change in the balance of crops over time. A comparison of prices is possible but should be treated with caution as the valuation may have reflected the quality of the crop as well as the acreage. Crops would usually be worth more as harvest time approached. In May

³⁵⁸ Ibid. pp.76-77.

³⁵⁹ Elder, *Lincolnshire Country Food*. pp.19-20,108.

³⁶⁰ Charles Brears, *A Short History of Lincolnshire* (Hull: A. Brown and Sons, 1927). p.112.

³⁶¹ LAO Inv. 85/65.

³⁶² LAO Inv. 86/37.

³⁶³ LAO Inv 117/374.

1579 an acre of corn was valued at 2s, in July 1594, at the equivalent of 10s, in July 1599 and September 1611, at 13s.4d.³⁶⁴ In 1538, month unknown, an acre of barley was valued at the equivalent of 2s.4d. and an acre of beans at 2d., in April 1584 an acre of barley and beans was said to be worth 4s., in May 1626 an acre of barley and lentils was assessed at 13s.4d.³⁶⁵ The value of meadow land, too, seems to have increased steadily. An 18 acre meadow was valued at £2.18s in July 1559 and a 19 acre meadow at £6 in August 1594 while a two acre meadow was assessed at £4 in August 1615.³⁶⁶

Agricultural equipment

Wains, carts, ploughs and harrows, the latter frequently specified as of iron, were the usual farming implements recorded in inventories. Ploughs appeared in fewer than a quarter of the inventories, usually singly, but John Nevell owned half a plough at his death in 1590 and three other men, all in the 1590s, each held two. It seems that fewer owned ploughs after 1600; 33% of inventories included a plough before that date and only 8% in the first half of the seventeenth century. Yet this was at a time when, nationally, the population was increasing and there was a greater incentive to exploit the land more intensively. This might be interpreted elsewhere as a sign of a shift from arable to pastoral farming but this is unlikely on the Lincolnshire marshland where the balance was already heavily in favour of the latter. Instead it could be confirmation that land was being engrossed by local yeomen and outsiders at the expense of the smaller farmers. More evidence that this was the case, is explored later in this chapter.

Spinning and Weaving

Closely related to the farming activities one might expect to find the spinning and weaving of cloth. Linen and woollen wheels often appeared together in the same inventory, linen wheels frequently in twos or threes, woollen wheels more rarely. Fewer than 10% of inventories before 1600 included a woollen wheel and just under 6% referred to a 'lyne' wheel, another two inventories mentioned a spinning wheel. In the first half of the seventeenth century the proportions had sharply increased, reflecting the growing demands of the textile industry, though no other evidence has been found in the documents to confirm that Marshchapel was serving a wider market. Woollen wheels appeared in 27% of inventories and linen wheels in 23%, but when multiple ownership

³⁶⁴ LAO Inv. 64/263, LAO Inv. 64/551, LAO Inv. 85/65, LAO LCC Admons 133/177.

³⁶⁵ LAO Inv. 7/89, LAO Inv. 70/157, LAO Inv. 131/169, 1626.

³⁶⁶ LAO Inv. 33/359, LAO Inv. 85/67, LAO Inv. 117/284.

is taken into account, there were only 17 woollen wheels compared to 23 linen wheels. The proportions were similar in seventeenth century North Somercotes where there were 27 woollen wheels and 39 linen wheels listed in inventories.³⁶⁷ This is particularly surprising when so little flax is recorded, either 'on the ground' or 'in store', though 'line' yarn or cloth appear as frequently as woollen yarn and cloth. Thirsk found a similar situation in the Lincolnshire fens where, she maintained, it must have been an industry serving more than domestic needs but it did not appear in public records because it did not compete in the export market.³⁶⁸ On the Isle of Axholme, where flax was spun and woven in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was a similar balance between the number of woollen and linen wheels. However, unlike the fens and the Lindsey marshes, there was plenty of evidence in inventories, not only of the growing, but also of the processing of flax.³⁶⁹ Why was this not so in Marshchapel?

When William Storre, yeoman, died in 1617 he willed that his two married sisters should have a stone of flax every year on St Bartholomew's Day for the rest of their lives. This suggests that some yeomen were growing flax and, also, that it was of some importance, at least, in the domestic economy.³⁷⁰ In Cottenham in Cambridgeshire, flax and hemp were grown in gardens on the edge of the fenland.³⁷¹ Though the sandy soil of the marshland was not well suited to the growing of these crops, it is possible that some hemp and flax was grown in Marshchapel in the garths of peasants whose wealth did not warrant a probate inventory. In 1627, Edward Greetham was fined 4d. for 'retting' hemp near the King's highway.³⁷² 'Retting' was a process in the preparation of flax or hemp which involved soaking the fibres in water to remove unwanted vegetable matter. It was sometimes done by spreading out the stalks and allowing rain or dew to effect the same process. This method would take about six weeks and would be more labour intensive as the stalks had to be turned regularly.³⁷³ It produced a poisonous substance

³⁶⁷ Teresa Maybury, "Courtier and Commoners: A Seventeenth Century Reclamation Project in the Lincolnshire Marshland" (BA, Hull, 1994).

³⁶⁸ Joan Thirsk, *The Rural Economy of England: Collected Essays* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), p.230.

³⁶⁹ Peter Fleet, "The Isle of Axholme, 1540-1640. Economy and Society" (PhD, University of Nottingham, 2002), p.218.

³⁷⁰ LAO LCC Wills 1617 ii 248.

³⁷¹ J.R.Ravensdale, *Liable to Floods: village landscape on the edge of the fens AD 450-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974). P.58.

³⁷² E.L. Royall, *The Manorial History of Fulstow* (Ilfracombe: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1977), p.15.

³⁷³ Wilkin and W.E.A., *All Things Forgotten: Village Life in Barnetby in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. p.65.

and was also inclined to give off an unpleasant odour. Hemp was used for rope making and for clothes and for the ‘harden’ bed linen of the labourer and the peasant farmer. While it is clear from the inventories that the wealthier farmer and his family would have linen sheets on their beds, harden sheets would usually suffice for their living-in servants.

Margaret Nevell, a widow, had two linen wheels and two woollen wheels when she died in 1591 but no flax or wool amongst her possessions. She must have been taking in work or even letting out the wheels, perhaps the chief source of income for herself and her unmarried daughter.³⁷⁴ Walter Storre’s two linen wheels and one woollen wheel were to be found in the servants’ chamber at his death in 1595. He also had 22 stones of wool valued at £14 and 10 yards of sack cloth.³⁷⁵ His three pairs of ‘wool cards’ would have been used to part and comb the fibres of wool to straighten them out before spinning. Walter Harpham had wool scales and weights and, at least, one linen wheel in 1607. He had yarn, linen and hemp together valued at £2.6s.8d. and wool valued at 16s.³⁷⁶

Finished cloth, wool, linen and harden, feature in many inventories in store and in use but it seems clear that weaving was left to the specialist. The only surviving inventory of a Marshchapel webster is that of John Farrow who died in 1616. It is in parts illegible but it is apparent that he did not leave a fortune. Apart from ‘two loomis and all the geare in the shoppe’ John had a cow, a young ‘quye’, two fillies and one pig. The value given for these items is illegible but may have been little more than his debts which amounted to £12.15s.11d. The major part of this was £8 which he owed for rent to Thomas Phillips, the son-in-law and heir of Walter Harpham.³⁷⁷ Surviving probate inventories from neighbouring parishes indicate that the webster usually combined his craft with small scale farming. John Paddison of Tetney died in 1607 with possessions valued at £4.3s.4d. He had a cow, two pigs, two breeding geese and a gander worth 40s. His loom with loom gears, a horn wheel, bar trees, a warp vat and a barrow were valued at 10s.³⁷⁸ The ‘horn wheel’ and the ‘bar trees’ may have been associated with a ‘warp

³⁷⁴ LAO Inv. 80/314, LAO LCC Wills 1591 ii, 7.

³⁷⁵ LAO Inv. 88/213.

³⁷⁶ LAO Inv. 102/252.

³⁷⁷ LAO LCC Admons 1616/180.

³⁷⁸ LAO LCC Admons 1607/196.

beam roller', the device onto which the warp thread was wound and from which it was drawn as the weaving progressed.³⁷⁹ Most of the websters had more than one loom. William Hatchcliffe, also of Tetney, left goods valued at £49.5s.10d. when he died in April 1621. He had 5lbs. of linen and 20lbs. of harden yarn valued at £2.13s.4d and in his workshop were his two looms and the warping vat with 'all other gears for weaving', together worth £4.³⁸⁰ In those inventories in which a distinction was made between types of loom, there were usually more linen than woollen looms. At his death in 1629 Gabriel Dunham, one of three weavers found in North Somercotes in the seventeenth century, owned two linen looms and one woollen loom together valued at £3.2s.8d.³⁸¹ There are still some unanswered questions concerning the source of the flax and the marketing of what must have been a considerable amount of linen.

5.2 Coastal Activities

Its coastal location had always been a crucial factor in the growth and development of Marshchapel. Without the accretion of the marshland over hundreds of years it could never have been more than a hamlet of Fulstow. Its flat, sandy beaches provided for the development of the salt making industry. Local ports and creeks facilitated communication, trade and fishing. Trading vessels and fishing boats were shown positioned off the coast at Marshchapel in Haiwarde's map of 1595. Maritime activity off the Lincolnshire coast had been important at least since the fourteenth century. Salt was exported through the local ports or creeks. The policy of the staple decreed that wool should be exported through Boston but some wool passed through other ports and creeks illegally. Louth Abbey is known to have exported wool through Saltfleet.³⁸² By the mid-sixteenth century, the export trade in both salt and wool had declined and significant maritime activity off the Lindsey coast had come to an end.³⁸³

Between 1550 and 1612 six boats were registered at Marshchapel. During the same period there were none registered at Tetney, two at North Cotes, one at Southole, one at Somercotes and 11 at Saltfleet. There were none registered at Marshchapel in the 1550s

³⁷⁹ OED

³⁸⁰ LAO Inv. 124/73.

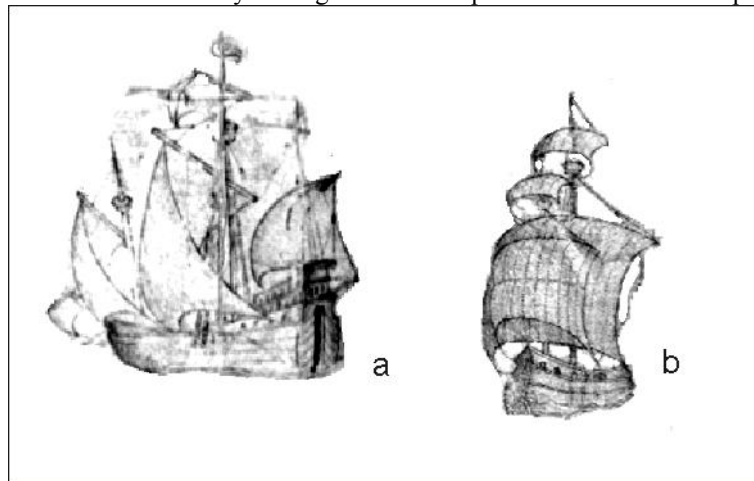
³⁸¹ LAO Inv 135/63.

³⁸² S. Pawley, "Lincolnshire Coastal Villages and the Sea, c.1300-c.1600." (University of Leicester PhD, 1984). pp.148-153.

³⁸³ Pawley, "Maritime Trade and Fishing, 1500-1700."pp.56-59, Pawley, "Lincolnshire Coastal Villages and the Sea, c.1300-c.1600."pp.238-239.

and 60s but there was a 28 ton vessel registered there in 1578, two each of 40 tons in 1580 and 1583-1588 as well as one of 70 tons in 1582, when it was also recorded that there were nine mariners and one master seaman. The 30 ton Cork and the 40 ton Elizabeth, both registered in 1595, were the last for Marshchapel.³⁸⁴ On the death of his father in 1601, Robert Lord Willoughby was advised by John Guevara, the son of Katherine Willoughby's Spanish cousin and Deputy Governor of Berwick, to sell up his ships as a 'charge intolerable' on his estate.³⁸⁵

Figure 5.3 Sixteenth century trading vessels as depicted in Haiwarde's map of 1595



a) A sixteenth century 'carrack', a large trading vessel. b) A two masted, intermediate sized trading vessel.³⁸⁶

Only one mariner was identified amongst the Marshchapel documents and he belongs to the first half of the sixteenth century, before the serious decline in maritime activity. William Moppyt described himself as a mariner when drawing up his will in 1535. He appears to have been a bachelor or a widower. He left the bulk of his goods to John and Elizabeth Athere, who may have been his son-in-law and daughter. His possessions included a boat and a mare together valued at 26s.8d. The valuation suggests that his boat was a small craft such as might have been used for fishing. He also had two cows and a couple of horses and he was able to leave 10s.4d. for 'a priest to sing for his soul and the souls of his friends'. He bequeathed a total of 8s.2d. to the church at Marshchapel, 4d. to Lincoln cathedral, 8d. to each of North Cotes and Fulstow churches and a further 3s.4d. to the church at Skeffling in Holderness, with a request that his

³⁸⁴ Pawley, "Lincolnshire Coastal Villages and the Sea, c.1300-c.1600."p.289.

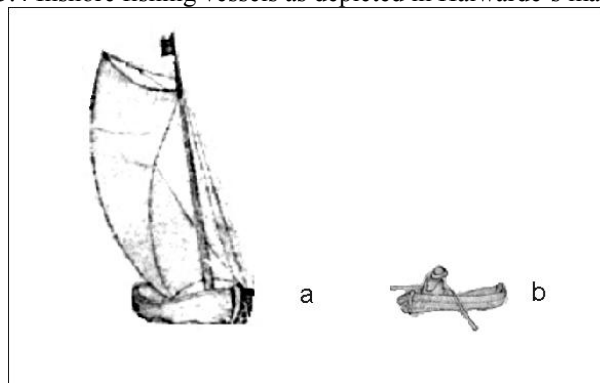
³⁸⁵ LAO 2ANC 14/17, LAO 8ANC 1/18.

³⁸⁶ Arthur Credland. Hull Maritime Museum. Personal communication.

executors should take it there.³⁸⁷ The term ‘mariner’ may indicate that his chief employment was as a seaman. He seemed to have little more in the way of possessions, though it is not possible to know what ‘the residue’ of his goods might include. There may have been other ‘mariners’ before 1600 but it is possible that, in general, sailors did not have sufficient means to warrant a probate inventory or will. Seven sailors were identified in the parish register before 1650, the first in 1600 when it began to be more common for status to be recorded.

Thomas Hewson, who died in the early 1540s, also owned a boat. His goods were appraised at £11.6s. and included his five cattle and 30 sheep valued together at £3.14s. while his boat with tackle was considered to be worth £5.³⁸⁸ At this early date, before the rapid rise in inflation, the valuation of the boat suggests that it was larger than the ‘cock’ a small fishing boat like the one owned by George Brather of North Cotes at his death in 1591 which, together with his ‘little keele’, was valued at £6.13s. George Brather’s ‘ship with all the furniture thereto belonging’ valued at £80 must have been a much bigger affair.³⁸⁹ Thomas Nevell died in 1594 leaving goods valued at about £260, including a ‘keele with timber thereto belonging’ worth £24.³⁹⁰ The ‘timber’ may have been a cargo of wood but the phrase ‘thereto belonging’ suggests that it is more likely to be part of the equipment of the vessel.

Figure 5.4 Inshore fishing vessels as depicted in Haiwarde’s map of 1595



a) a ‘multi purpose, coastal and inshore craft, probably covered by the term *billinger*’.³⁹¹ b) The man in the rowing boat is shown on the map off the coast of ‘Warholme’, now Wragholme, immediately to the south of Marshchapel.

³⁸⁷ LAO LCC Wills 1535-7, 16.

³⁸⁸ LAO Inv. 11/252, LAO LCC Wills 1541-3, 166.

³⁸⁹ LAO Inv. 81/495.

³⁹⁰ LAO Inv. 85/126.

³⁹¹ Arthur Credland, Hull Maritime Museum. Personal communication.

Only two boat owners were found amongst the 60 Marshchapel inventories dated between 1600 and 1649 and they were both amongst the more substantial members of the parish. As we have seen, Walter Harpham, was the wealthiest man in Marshchapel. Amongst his goods at his death in 1607 were a keel and a cobble, which were valued with all their tack and furniture, at £60.³⁹² The 'keel', the name used on the north east coast of England for a barge, was a single-masted, inshore vessel with a square sail.³⁹³ The inventory of Edward Lacon of Tetney, drawn up in 1615, gives an example of how a keel might be used; listed among his possessions is '50 quarters of barley sold and sent away by keel to the market'.³⁹⁴ The 'cobble' was a fishing vessel of a kind which has been in use since the fourteenth century. Cobbles varied in size; a single masted cobble could be 25 to 30 feet long and might be used for catching fish by long lines or with lobster pots. Elsewhere it is known as a 'lugger' because of its dipping 'lug' sail. Larger versions, with more than one mast, could be used for catching fish with fishing nets. The cobble has a unique design which makes it easier to launch and to haul back up the beach. Motorised cobbles can still be seen at Flamborough Head today.³⁹⁵ The only other reference to a vessel in Marshchapel was in the inventory of Allan Champion who died in 1637 leaving 'the third part of a quarter of a little bark or ship' valued at £5. If this means that Allan had one twelfth share in the ship, it must have been a fairly substantial vessel to be worth £60. The total value of Allan Champion's goods was assessed at £135.15s., a little below the average for a yeoman in Marshchapel at that time.³⁹⁶

There were 234 fishermen in Lincolnshire according to the muster of 1582 but in 1628 only 102 were recorded. These were 'fishermen who went to sea without boats', presumably employee fishermen. None was recorded at Marshchapel though there were three each at neighbouring Tetney, North Cotes and Wragholme, four at Somercotes, five at Skidbrooke and six at Saltfleetby.³⁹⁷ Amongst those listed at Wragholme was

³⁹² LAO Inv. 102/252.

³⁹³ Arthur Credland.

³⁹⁴ LAO Inv 117/374.

³⁹⁵ Arthur Credland, Curator Hull Maritime Museum. Personal communication.

³⁹⁶ LAO LCC Admons 1637/40.

³⁹⁷ Pawley, "Lincolnshire Coastal Villages and the Sea, c.1300-c.1600.", T.N.A. SP16/138/61.; C. Sturman, unpublished notes.

Sylvester Wood, aged '34 or thereabouts', the same who held small parcels of land in Marshchapel in 1595, when he could have been only an infant. In 1638 he was fined 10s. for making an affray and carrying off wrecked goods.³⁹⁸ At the time of his death in 1652 he was living in Marshchapel in a house which he had bought from Harpham Weslyd, great grandson of Walter Harpham. Sylvester, who was apparently still a bachelor, described himself as 'yeoman'.³⁹⁹ He was the great grandson of Arthur Washinglay and the grandson of Thomas Grant who, in their life times, had been among the wealthiest men in the parish.

Life would have been different for Henry Carr who was described as 'sailor' in the parish register in 1615 at the death of his wife and again in 1617 at the death of one of his sons. He had fathered ten children between 1592 and 1610, at least four of whom had predeceased him. In 1607, Walter Harpham had bequeathed to him 20s. and released him from 'all such debts and fines of money as he oweth me so that he make to me or my executor a perfect account of such debts'. Walter also left to Henry 'one lease of the haven with the fishing and the fouleing which I have by grant from Sir Christopher Hilliard, he paying the rent and doing such suite and service as therto belongeth'.⁴⁰⁰ It was probably the same Henry Carr whose status was given as 'labourer' at the death of his daughter in 1621 and who had previously been listed amongst the poor in the will of John Hobson.⁴⁰¹ In such circumstances it is unlikely that he had sufficient wealth at his death to warrant a probate document and none has been found.

Sea fishing had been a significant activity off the Lindsey coast in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries but by the sixteenth century it had declined to become 'a small scale, offshore concern using boats of a few tons burden, crewed by men for whom it was a by-employment rather than a full time activity'.⁴⁰² According to Brears, local fishermen were more likely to buy their fish from the fishing boats of other countries or even join the pirates who were endemic in the area.⁴⁰³ The coast of Lincolnshire is said

³⁹⁸ Royall, *The Manorial History of Fulstow*. p.15.

³⁹⁹ LAO LCC Wills 1652, 243.

⁴⁰⁰ LAO LCC Wills 1607 ii, 306.

⁴⁰¹ LAO LCC Wills 1618 i, 127.

⁴⁰² Ambler and Watkinson, eds., *Farmers and Fishermen*, Pawley, "Lincolnshire Coastal Villages and the Sea, c.1300-c.1600."

⁴⁰³ Brears, *A Short History of Lincolnshire*. Pp.125-126.

to have been 'infested' with pirates in 1575. Four were caught and held in Boston in April that year when the Mayor and the Customer of Port sought advice from the lords of the Queen's Council as to what should be done with them.⁴⁰⁴ Attempts were made to deal with piracy and smuggling at the start of Elizabeth's reign but gaps remained.⁴⁰⁵ None of those whose inventories are available for Marshchapel before 1650 is identified as a fisherman. Reference is made in some of the inventories to items which were associated with fishing but it is clear that this is a part time activity. John Marflet, salter, had 'fishing gear' amongst his belongings in 1590.⁴⁰⁶ Christopher Dawson, also a salter, had 'sea cardes and the bookes thereto belonging valued at 3s.4d. The sea 'cardes' would have been charts or maps and the books may also have been navigational aids.⁴⁰⁷ This suggests the possibility that Christopher was able to read.

There is more evidence to indicate that the natural resources of the marshland were being exploited. There were plenty of eels in the drains and some sea fish could be caught in the creeks and shallow tidal streams of the salt marsh. Specific items identified in the Marshchapel inventories were 'nattes', 'prickes' and 'gades'. Thomas South, fowler, had one 'butte pricke' and one 'elle gade' at his death in 1633.⁴⁰⁸ The 'prick' was a two pronged instrument which could be used for spearing eel or for catching 'butte', that is flat fish such as halibut and flounder.⁴⁰⁹ The 'gade' may have been a similar device, possibly the same type referred to elsewhere as an 'elger' or a 'stang'.⁴¹⁰ Eels could also be caught in a wicker work, tubular-shaped trap, such as is still set in the ditches and drains of the fens today. In a similar method, known as 'dumping', a large, round-mouthed, 'dump net' was set and the fisherman would cause a disturbance in the water further along the drain and so drive the eels into the net.⁴¹¹

Inventories from neighbouring parishes provide additional information about fishing and fowling activities. At his death in 1540, Thomas Breuster of North Somercotes had 'an olde seyne, on fowling nett, 10 fathene of new nett, syxe pece of stryng with on old

⁴⁰⁴ Pishey Thompson, *The History and Antiquities of Boston*, 1997 ed. (Sleaford: Heritage Lincolnshire, 1997), p.71.

⁴⁰⁵ Pawley, "Lincolnshire Coastal Villages and the Sea, c.1300-c.1600." pp.51-57.

⁴⁰⁶ L.A.O. Inv. 79/99.

⁴⁰⁷ LAO LCC Admons 1592/242., OED

⁴⁰⁸ LAO LCC Admons 1633/107.

⁴⁰⁹ OED

⁴¹⁰ Elder, *Lincolnshire Country Food*, L.A.O. Inv. 85/21.

⁴¹¹ Elder, *Lincolnshire Country Food*, p.59.

hawser to be occupyede at the sea' valued at 7s.8d. and 'halfe an olde boote and two but nettes with on mayll' valued at 10s. 4d.⁴¹² The 'but nettes' were an alternative to the 'prick' for catching flat fish and nets could be used also for catching eels. The 'seyne' or 'seane' and the 'mayll' or 'mayl' were larger nets. A 'hawser' was a strong rope or cable which may have been used to be stretched out across a creek to support short baited lines at regular intervals. Alternatively, it could have supported a net across the shore or a creek to catch fish at the ebbing of the tide. In 1586, Richard Wayes and Thomas Wrightson, both fishermen of North Somercotes, each left 'a maile with the staies and poles', which may have been used in this way, and each also had three 'butte' nets. Their goods were valued at £12.18s.11d and £11.2s.6d respectively; each had a cow, a few sheep and some poultry. In addition, Thomas had three linen wheels and a woollen wheel but he also owed 26s.8d to Richard Wayes's wife. It may be more than a coincidence that the inventories of these two fishermen were drawn up on consecutive days in April that year.⁴¹³

Apart from eel and 'butt', types of fish caught are rarely identified but Robert Breuster, son of Thomas, owned 'three herryng nets and on fowlyng net' worth 2s. at his death in 1546 and John Warmeth of Tetney had two 'herrynge barrells' in 1564.⁴¹⁴ Although no mention has been found in the inventories, it would appear from the reference on Haiwarde's map that cockles were available for the picking. Cockling continued to be important long after the reclamation schemes of the seventeenth century. In 1791, it was said that cockles worth £200 were gathered there each year and marketed at Caistor and elsewhere in Lincolnshire and some were taken by boat to Hull. At harvest time 'strong, able men employ themselves in cockling and cannot be prevailed to leave it for harvest wages, to the great inconvenience of the farmers'.⁴¹⁵

Thomas South, fowler of Marshchapel, had fowling gear worth 10s. amongst his possessions when he died in 1633.⁴¹⁶ And there were others in the parish who were exploiting the wild fowl on the marshes. Richard Wattam had fowling gear in 1557, Thomas Wilson, salter, left a bow and six arrows and a bill at his death in 1596. John

⁴¹² LAO Inv 8/100.

⁴¹³ LAO Inv. 73/100.

⁴¹⁴ LAO Inv. 15/88, LAO Inv. 44/65.

⁴¹⁵ LAO Hill 22/1/9//3/40.

⁴¹⁶ LAO LCC Admons 1633/107.

Addison, blacksmith and alehouse keeper, had ‘certain nattes and William Wood ‘certain nattes for fishing and fowling’.⁴¹⁷ John Brown, of Grainthorpe, left ‘3 fleyght netts and one halfe seyn’ in 1537.⁴¹⁸ Thomas Brown’s fowling gear included ‘nettes, stales, staffes and bages’ and Richard Green of North Somercotes had ‘firrettes’ as well as nets.⁴¹⁹ Birds such as stints and even sparrows were not too small to be considered suitable game.⁴²⁰ By the turn of the century the wealthier members of the community were using guns. George Brather of North Cotes had a musket and a ‘fowling piece’ as well as bows and arrows in 1591.⁴²¹ George Cabourne, a Tetney yeoman, had a fowling piece in 1599 and Edward Lacon, gent, possessed two ‘birding pieces’ in 1615.⁴²² By 1637 William Bryant, a Grainthorpe weaver, was the owner of ‘parte of a fowling peece’ as well as other fowling gear.⁴²³ But the natural bounty of the marshland was not freely available and, probably, beyond the resources of many: in 1558 the penalty for fishing or fowling in Marshchapel without a licence was 3s.4d.⁴²⁴ In 1607, Walter Harpham bequeathed to Henry Carr ‘one lease of the haven with the fishing and the fouleing which I have by grant from Sir Christopher Hilliard, he paying the rent and doing such suite and service as therto belongeth’.⁴²⁵ In 1609, a Mr Lacon of Tetney held the lease of the ‘fishing and the fowling and wrecks of the sea’ in that parish for an annual rent of 20s. and was said to hold similar royalties at North Cotes.⁴²⁶

5.3 Other crafts and trades

We have already made the acquaintance of some of those Marshchapel inhabitants whose crafts or trades were closely associated with aspects of farming or with the sea. Others who have been identified through probate documents include three carpenters, one ‘mercier’, two butchers, one shepherd, one cook, two tailors, two millers and one wheelwright cum alehouse keeper. In addition, from the parish register it has been possible to identify one melster, two blacksmiths, one tanner, two rope makers and one shoemaker. The fact that no probate documents are available for the latter group

⁴¹⁷ LAO Inv. 31/843, LAO LCC Admons 1613/300, LAO LCC Admons 1604/227.

⁴¹⁸ LAO Inv. 6/203.

⁴¹⁹ LAO Inv. 106/213, LAO Inv. 224/12.

⁴²⁰ LAO Inv. 114/224, LAO LCC Admons 1616/106.

⁴²¹ LAO Inv. 81/495.

⁴²² LAO Inv 117/374, LAO Inv. 82/345.

⁴²³ LAO Inv. 145/279.

⁴²⁴ Royall, *The Manorial History of Fulstow*. p.11.

⁴²⁵ L.A.O. L.C.C. Wills 1607 ii, 306.

⁴²⁶ TNA DL 42, 119 f.108 & f. 196.

suggests that, at their deaths, their possessions were of little value. Together these represent most of the crafts and trades that one might expect to find in a rural parish in Lincolnshire. Thatchers could often be found in fenland parishes where reeds for roofing were plentiful which suggests that roofing with reeds was a skilled job. They were rarely found in the marshes, where reeds were scarce and a straw thatch could be put on by a non-specialist.⁴²⁷ Most trades and craftsmen were also farmers and, in terms of wealth, might be as prosperous as a lesser yeoman or as vulnerable to fate as the poorest husbandman, as the contrasting situations of the two seamen, Sylvester Wood and Henry Carr, illustrate so effectively.

The millers

At his death in April 1618, miller John Jolliffe left goods valued at £47.1.4d., the highest value for any Marshchapel artisan before 1650. There is nothing remaining in his damaged inventory to connect him with his trade. His livestock, which included seven cattle, one mare, a filly, ten old sheep and 12 lambs, was valued at £24, a little over half the value of his total inventory. He also had 21 bushels of barley.⁴²⁸ He was the father of Euday Jolliffe, goddaughter of Ursula Milles, and the only other of that family name to be recorded in the parish register. He may have belonged to the family of Henry Jolliffe, citizen and scrivener of St. Martin in the Vintry in London, who had held 107 acres freehold in Marshchapel and 80 acres in Fulstow at the time of his death, just before the drawing up of the 1595 survey.⁴²⁹ If that is the case, his could be one of several examples of how provision was sometimes made for junior members of wealthier families, by giving them an opportunity in an occupation related to the main source of income.

The probate inventory of miller William Paddison, who died in 1629, is also damaged and can tell us little about his economic and social status but he also left a will which is more revealing.⁴³⁰ He was clearly a single man. His main beneficiary and executor was his sister. He was a 'living in' servant and left 6d. to every one of his 'fellow servants in the house'. He left 3s.4d. to the poor of each of the parishes of Marshchapel and North Cotes; two sheep and his clothes to his brother, Thomas; 2s. to his god daughter, Mary

⁴²⁷ L. B. Barley and M. W. Barley, "Lincolnshire Craftsmen in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *The Lincolnshire Historian* 2, no. 6 (1959).pp.7-22.

⁴²⁸ LAO Inv. 121/178.

⁴²⁹ TNA PCC 79 Drake, 1596.

⁴³⁰ LAO LCC ADMON 1613/230, LAO LCC Wills 1629, 148.

Mawer; 12d. to each of his other two god children; 2s. to one Elizabeth Farrow and the residue to his sister, Alice. William, apparently, was not a local man for his death is the only Paddison event recorded in the Marshchapel parish register before 1650. Perhaps he was employed by Thomas Phillips, who held the mill on the parish boundary with North Cotes, which had previously been held by his father-in-law, Walter Harpham.⁴³¹

The wheelwright cum alehouse keeper

John Addison was described by his neighbours as ‘wheelwright’ but recorded in the parish register as ‘alehouse keeper’ when he died in 1613. There was little in his inventory to connect him with either occupation except, perhaps ‘certain weights and tools’, some wood, a grind stone and a hogshead barrel. His goods were valued at £32, of which £23 was in livestock and farming equipment. His four ‘kine’ and two ‘quyes’, alone were valued at £9, indicating the importance of dairying in his domestic economy.⁴³² He held the lease of Marshchapel vicarage which may have been a fairly substantial building. Rooms named in his inventory include a hall, a parlour, a kitchen, a brew house, a chamber, a buttery and a milkhouse. The vicarage would have occupied a central position in the village and provided room enough, perhaps, to run an alehouse.⁴³³ The Addisons seem to have arrived in the parish early in the seventeenth century. Matthew Addison, the blacksmith who died in 1610, may have been John’s brother.

The cook

The possessions of Thomas Reade, cook, were appraised at £29.12s.6d. at his death in March 1609. Amongst his goods was a ‘cook house with the beast standings and all the wood in it’ valued at 20s. Again, his dairy cattle were a significant part of his wealth, his two ‘kine’ being valued at £5. He also left a stone of ‘line’ or flax, 12 yards of sackcloth, 7lbs. of harden yarn, three old linen wheels and a woollen wheel.⁴³⁴ Thomas seems to have been a newcomer to the parish when his wife died in December 1599. Eight months later he married Margaret Bartill, another recent arrival in the parish and possibly the widow of Steven Bartill, labourer, who had died in 1598.

⁴³¹ TNA DL 42, 119.

⁴³² kine-milking cows. quyes-female calves.

⁴³³ LAO LCC Admons 1613/230.

⁴³⁴ LAO Inv. 109/77.

Thomas's role in the community is not clear from his inventory. It seems likely that his 'bake house' housed an oven and, elsewhere, he may have been known as a baker. Ovens were not common in homes until the second half of the eighteenth century, although some of the gentry may have had them earlier. Evidence from inventories indicates that most cooking would have been done in front of the open fire. Bread may have been baked in a clay oven out of doors or, perhaps, indoors near the hearth.⁴³⁵ In most towns there were bake houses where the inhabitants could take their bread or meat to be baked. Little is known about the availability of such facilities in villages but Thomas Reade's inventory suggests that he provided a similar service in Marshchapel.⁴³⁶

The carpenters

There were four carpenters who left probate inventories, all of them in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The presence of so many carpenters might be associated with an improved standard of living, at least, for some members of the community who had money enough to rebuild or extend their homes. When Edmund Docking died in 1566 he left goods valued at £2.4s.6d. but he had debts amounting to £1.12s.6d. He owned a cow and a pig but his inventory was unusual for the detail it contained of his working tools. He left a 'qwart sawe and iiij wombles' valued at 4s., 'two great axes' valued at 2s.8d., 'an old quart sawe and an old hand sawe, ij chesselles, one rulle, one iron brayse, one payre of pynsors with one thistle, one payre of compasses, one stave, one saw wrayste' together valued at 2s.4d.⁴³⁷ The fact that there is no other evidence of his presence in Marshchapel suggests that Edmund was an incomer.

Thomas Kirk, also, left only his probate inventory as evidence of his life in the parish. At his death in February 1580 his neighbours valued his goods at £14.14s. There is some evidence of his craft in 'his tools' and also, perhaps, in the 'grindstone' that were listed in his inventory. As with most craftsmen, the cattle constituted a significant part of his wealth; he had four kine and a calf valued at £5.13.4d. As well as his hall and parlour he had a 'milk house' with 16 milk bowls and three cheese vats. He had one

⁴³⁵ Barley and Barley, "Lincolnshire Craftsmen in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." p.22.

⁴³⁶ Thirsk, *Food in Early Modern England: Phases, Fads, Fashions 1500-1760*. pp.217-8, 234-5, 247.

⁴³⁷ LAO Inv. 46/103. 'thistle' - thixle, adze; 'womble' – wimble, gimlet, small boring-tool, OED.

mare valued at £1.13s.4d. and £1 worth of hay. He had an additional source of income in his two spinning wheels, one for wool and one for linen.⁴³⁸

Edmund Marflett appears to have been the wealthiest of the carpenters for whom a probate inventory survives and, unlike the first two, he belonged to a family which was well established in the parish. He died in 1587 leaving possessions valued at £28.9s.4d. The pattern of ownership was similar to that of other craftsmen. He had six dairy cows, a mare, another horse and nine sheep. He had a churn and a cheese press with other dairying equipment. His ‘carpenter tools, one saddel and on brydell’ were valued at £1. Also worth £1 was his ‘half of one lease’.⁴³⁹ Edmund bequeathed his ‘working toyles with one grindinge stone and one benche with all thinges thereto belonginge’ as well as his saddle and bridle to his brother, John, in whose service he also left his apprentice, Mark Dawson.⁴⁴⁰

John Marflett was described as ‘carpenter’ in December 1590 when he was among those who appraised the goods of his father, John Marflett the elder, salter.⁴⁴¹ The younger John may already have been a sick man for his father made no mention of him in his will. When John died in March 1592, he still had the working tools bequeathed to him by his brother five years earlier. His neighbours described him as ‘bachelor’. His goods were valued at £15.9s.4d. but he had debts amounting to £18.17s.3d. They included £1.7s. owing to William Wood ‘for the time he was sicke before he departed’ which may indicate that he had been unable to practise as a carpenter for some time and explain why he was in debt.⁴⁴² In his will, John required that his tools and ‘apparrell’ should be sold and the proceeds divided between the three sons of his deceased brother, Edmund, and ‘put forth for their behouf ... while they come to the age of 21 yeres’. He left the sad proviso ‘if my debts come to more than all my goods tooles and apparell ... my executors shall see my debts paid and take all my goods whatsoever and none to have any penny portion’.⁴⁴³ There would have been little left for his nephews.

⁴³⁸ LAO Inv. 62/386.

⁴³⁹ LAO Inv. 74/24.

⁴⁴⁰ LAO LCC Wills 1587, 173.

⁴⁴¹ L.A.O. Inv. 79/99.

⁴⁴² LAO Inv. 82/323.

⁴⁴³ LAO LCC Wills 1592, 3.

The butchers

At his death in April 1584-5, John Till, butcher, left goods valued at £20.14s. He had five dairy cows and a 'caid' mare, a two year old filly and 16 sheep. He had a pair of oxen valued at £5.13.4d., but he owed £6 for a pair of the same. That seems to suggest that his neighbours thought that he had paid over the odds for them. As he held some land, it is possible that he used them to pull the plough though, as a butcher, it is, perhaps, more likely that he had bought them for meat. He had four acres of barley and four acres of beans on the ground. He had a lease of Roger Green of 'certen ground' for three years, valued at 3s. and another lease of a 'certen aker of ground' for one year, valued at 3s.6d.⁴⁴⁴ Arthur Till was fathering a family by 1588, just three or four years after the death of John. At his death in 1629, Arthur left little wealth behind him; his goods, valued at £6.1s., included three dairy cows and some hay, together valued at £5.⁴⁴⁵ He may already have been in his sixties, an elderly man by the standards of the day. He left a nine year old daughter, Elizabeth, and a three year old son, John, who were orphaned the following year at the death of Arthur's third wife. There were no further records of Tills in the parish register until Elizabeth married in 1650.

The tailors

Jeffrey Bower, tailor, died in March 1591 leaving goods valued at £7.17s.8d. His all important two kine, a calf and some hay, valued at £3.13.4d. represented almost half of the total sum.⁴⁴⁶ His daughter, Agnes, had died a few days before him. To his son, Thomas, who must have been only a child, he left household goods and a calf. His wife had been Alison Dawson. To his brother-in-law and 'trustie friend', Arthur Dawson, he bequeathed a scythe and scythe shaft with some other implements and to John Dawson he gave 'my sheres, my pressing iron, my thimble and needle with all other implements that belong to the ... of tayler crafte'. Another three Dawson brothers received 4d. each while the remainder of his goods were left to wife, Alison.⁴⁴⁷ Surprisingly, given his connections to one of the most substantial families in the parish, when young Thomas Bower died in 1602 he was described in the parish register as 'a poor boy'.

⁴⁴⁴ LAO Inv. 70/157.

⁴⁴⁵ LAO LCC ADMON 1630/130.

⁴⁴⁶ LAO Inv. 79/106.

⁴⁴⁷ LAO LCC Wills1591 i, 379.

Nicholas Berridge was the only other tailor who left a probate inventory and he also left a will. His goods were valued at £13.16s., almost half of which appeared to be a debt of £6 which his brother, Thomas, owed to him. Nicholas owned some household goods but there is no sign of the ubiquitous dairy cows.⁴⁴⁸ He may have been in lodgings for some of his household goods, which were to be sold to pay for his funeral, were with John Ibre. Arthur Laughton's wife was to receive 'a bed blanket which lies on my bed and a little pan'. He gave to his 'father-in-law', probably his step father, the £5 which he was owed as part of his 'portion'. Nicholas died a bachelor but his chief beneficiary and executor was Ellen Neave, 'who I had purposed to make my wife'. Of the £6 owed to him by his brother, he gave £1 each to his other three brothers and his sister and £2 to Ellen, 'his intended'. Another £1 owed to him by William Fenwick, he bequeathed to the poor of Marshchapel. His 'man', Richard Tuplin, was to have 'My workyday suite of apparell and a fustian dublett, a shirt, a pressing iron and sheers with a pair of tenters'.⁴⁴⁹ Nicholas was a young man who appeared to be doing well in his trade before his untimely death. Though Marshchapel was given as his parish in both his inventory and his will, Nicholas was not a local man. There are no other Berridge events in the parish register during our period.

The shepherd

Thomas Walesbie is the only shepherd to have been identified amongst those Marshchapel residents who left probate inventories in our period. He must have been an incomer as there are no other records of this family name in the parish register. At his death in 1587/8 he left goods to the value of £6, including a cow valued at £1.6s.8d., some hay valued at £1 and two sheep.⁴⁵⁰ The fact that no other shepherds have been identified as leaving probate documents suggests that, in general, they owned very little of value. There was, at least one other shepherd in Marshchapel at the same time as Thomas. When Thomas Hill died in July 1579/80, he owed 18s. to his shepherd, John Palmer, and in May the same year Arthur Leson died owing 3s.4d. to Thomas Walesbie.⁴⁵¹ Thomas may have been a single man as there is no evidence of a house in his inventory. He may have been 'living in' or in lodgings and so financially better off than those of his peers who had a home to run and a family to support.

⁴⁴⁸ LAO Inv. 115/111.

⁴⁴⁹ LAO LCC Wills 1615, 213.

⁴⁵⁰ LAO Inv. 74/32.

⁴⁵¹ LAO Inv 65/100, LAO Inv. 64/263.

The mercer

Lastly amongst our tradesman is John Clarke who died in 1583. Although John's trade is not recorded in his probate inventory, some items listed in it suggest that he was an itinerant seller of goods. However, in the inventory of Robert Palmer he is described as 'mercier'.⁴⁵² His possessions, valued at £5.0s.8d, included some household goods and 'his packe with the wares therein' which was valued at 50s. His debts amounted to 12s.5d.⁴⁵³ He owed 4s for spoons and 1s.4d for knives. He owed 2s to 'one William of Manchester' and other relatively small sums in Gayton, Louth and Fulstow. He was owed 4s.2d of which 1s. was a debt owing to him by Randall More of Wainfleet. Robert Clarke, who died in 1607 was described as 'melster', presumably involved in brewing, and Robert Clarke, who died in 1610 was a tailor while Thomas and Edward Clarke were both recorded in the parish register as labourers.

John Clarke was not typical of the Lincolnshire mercers of the seventeenth century as described by Jim Johnston. Using probate inventories Dr Johnston identified 156 mercers in Lincolnshire between 1567 and 1733. He acknowledged that there would have been mercers for whom no inventory survived. The number of mercers increased between 1600 and 1640 by which time there was, at least, one in Tetney and another in North Somercotes.⁴⁵⁴ Johnston did not find any mercers in Louth at this time but the Blanchards have already been identified as a family of mercers, though no probate inventories have been found for them. The main stock in trade of the mercers included light textiles, known as 'mercery ware', accessories to costume or haberdashery and groceries. Most of the rural mercers were also involved in agriculture. Wealthier merchants were often money lenders or financiers, as is clear from the bills and bonds with which they are credited and, sometimes the large sums of money included in 'purse and apparel'. The most successful set up outposts and employed apprentices and journeymen.⁴⁵⁵ The increasing number of mercers reflects the growing importance of the textile industry.

⁴⁵² LAO Inv 50/287B.

⁴⁵³ Waters Colin, *A Dictionary of Old Trades, Titles and Occupations*, 2nd ed. (Newbury: Countryside Books, 2002).p.109.

⁴⁵⁴ Jim Johnston, "Lincolnshire Mercers in the Seventeenth Century," *East Midland Historian* 16 (2008). pp.21-40.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.pp.21-40.

The one mercer who has been identified for North Somercotes may have already retired from his mercery business before his death, as there is no evidence in his inventory of any stock. When Abel Hill died in 1630, he was not the wealthiest of mercers but his standard of living could be compared with that of the average yeoman. His goods were valued at £283. He had a large, well furnished house and it was clear that he was still involved in agriculture. He had 94 sheep, a pair of oxen and six horses. He had a lease valued at £80 and a debt book which recorded loans to the value of £20.⁴⁵⁶ The fact that he was able to make a comfortable living as a mercer on the Lindsey marshes must be evidence of the growing purchasing power of some sections of the local community.

5.4 Labourers

It was estimated in Chapter Four that those who relied on wage labour for their livelihood may have constituted, at least, one third of the total population of Marshchapel at the time of the survey in 1595.⁴⁵⁷ According to Bowden, at the beginning of the Tudor period many of the agricultural wage earners were sons or brothers waiting to take over the family holding. Those with no such expectations were probably out-numbered by landholders. As the sixteenth century progressed, the position changed and an increasing proportion of the population became dependent upon wages or poor relief for the major part of their livelihood.⁴⁵⁸ The differentiation between rich and poor labourers increased as the seventeenth century advanced.⁴⁵⁹ Wrightson described the life of a labourer as a constant battle for survival. 'Labouring families lived in one room cottages for the most part, with little furniture, and on a diet of bread, cheese, lard, soup, small beer and garden greens, occasionally supplemented by better fare at harvest time supplied by employers'.⁴⁶⁰ Those often lived best who lived in, usually in adolescence, when they were housed and fed by their employers and in receipt of a small wage.⁴⁶¹

Amongst the surviving Marshchapel inventories from before 1650, there are 14 in which the status of the deceased is given as labourer and one who, at his death in

⁴⁵⁶ LAO Inv 137/366. I am indebted to Ian Rowson for this information.

⁴⁵⁷ Alan Everitt, "Farm Labourers," in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1500-1640*, ed. Joan Thirsk (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1967). pp.398-399.

⁴⁵⁸ Bowden, "Agricultural Prices, Farm Profits and Rents."p.598.

⁴⁵⁹ Everitt, "Farm Labourers."p.462.

⁴⁶⁰ Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680*, *Hutchinson Social History of England* (London: Hutchinson, 1982).p.35.

⁴⁶¹ Everitt, "Farm Labourers."p.449.

January 1582, was described as a servant to Bernard Hagg. John Dawson's possessions, together valued at £11, included his purse of £9, and his four ewes valued at £1 and his apparel also worth £1.⁴⁶² He was apparently 'living in' as he had no household goods and had been able to save and acquire a few animals which, perhaps, he was allowed to keep on his employer's land. As a poorer member of a substantial local family, he may have been in a privileged position compared with many servants. His employer, whose status was recorded as yeoman at his death in 1594, was a member of another of the wealthy local families.

Only one of the 14 labourers' inventories, that of Steven Bartle who died in 1598, was drawn up before 1600. There may have been labourers who left inventories before that date but the status of the deceased was rarely recorded before the end of the sixteenth century. Twelve of the inventories known to be of labourers were drawn up in the first quarter of the next century and only one in the second quarter. As the numbers are small this may not be significant but it could indicate that fewer labourers in Marshchapel had sufficient means to require an inventory and thus be a reflection of the declining economic status of those who were wholly or partly dependent upon wages. This would be consistent with the wider trend: nationally, the proportion of labourers leaving inventories declined in the first half of the seventeenth century and there was an increasing differentiation in terms of wealth within the labouring community.⁴⁶³

There are too few labourers' inventories identified for Marshchapel in the sixteenth century to provide a comparison but the values of those for the seventeenth century vary widely. With possessions valued at £42.2s.2d., Thomas Hawson was better off than many a husbandman. When he died in August 1615 he had nine head of cattle, a mare, two pigs and some hens. He had £4 invested in a two acre meadow. He had bacon, milk and cheese in store and he could afford the luxury of linen. As well as a hall and a parlour he had a buttery and a milk house.⁴⁶⁴ At the lower end of the scale was Walter Appleby whose goods were valued at £1.12s.4d. at his death in January 1623 but he also owed 18s. in rent. There was little sign of comfort among his meagre possessions. He had a linen wheel and a woollen wheel but he may have been too old or too ill to make

⁴⁶² LAO Inv. 68/103.

⁴⁶³ Everitt, "Farm Labourers." p.424

⁴⁶⁴ LAO Inv. 117/284.

use of them.⁴⁶⁵ Most of the labourers for whom probate documents survive possessed two or three cows and one or two calves and some had a few sheep. Spinning appears to be the most common by-employment available to the peasant labourers of Marshchapel and may have been a significant factor in raising the standard of living for some of them. At least three inventories of labourers included wool and linen wheels and there were two others in which 'wheels' almost certainly referred to spinning wheels. Thomas Clarke, labourer, owned two linen wheels as well as a woollen wheel.⁴⁶⁶

Those labourers who left inventories were amongst the more fortunate of those who were dependent upon wages. It has been calculated that, nationally, about one labourer in four was sufficiently well off to do so.⁴⁶⁷ Little can be known of those who left no probate documents but it is likely that conditions varied widely. Some may have lived in a cottage with a few acres of land attached which could be utilised to help subsidise their wages. Vegetables could be grown in the garth and, perhaps, some flax or hemp. In some parishes, rights of common made a significant contribution to the welfare of the labouring community in that it could enable them to keep a cow or a few sheep. A detailed study of Fulstow Manor Court Rolls may eventually reveal information about customary rights regarding gleaning and grazing in Marshchapel. No doubt the poor would take advantage of whatever they could obtain from the marshland whether lawfully or otherwise. The availability of fish and fowl has already been discussed. Edible plants, such as samphire, would have been welcomed in season, the humble nettle could be eaten as a salad ingredient and thistles were used like rhubarb.⁴⁶⁸

The homes of the landless labourers may have been no more than 'one roomed hovels of sticks and dirt' or, at best a cottage built of wattle and daub over a wooden frame and thatched with straw.⁴⁶⁹ For those partly dependent on wages, a poor harvest, old age or illness could mean unemployment and hardship. For the landless labourer such misfortune could mean starvation and even death. In those circumstances, at least until the effective establishment of the Poor Law, the attitudes of the employers towards their employees could be of crucial importance. Unfortunately, the accounts of the Overseers

⁴⁶⁵ LAO LCC Admons 1623/244.

⁴⁶⁶ LAO LCC Admons 1613/22.

⁴⁶⁷ Everitt, "Farm Labourers." p.420.

⁴⁶⁸ Elder, *Lincolnshire Country Food*.pp.55-58.

⁴⁶⁹ Everitt, "Farm Labourers." pp.442-445.

of the Poor for Marshchapel have not survived. Some evidence about the level of poverty, gleaned from wills, is explored later in this chapter.

5.5 Going up and down in the world

In examining the social structure of Marshchapel in the century between 1540 and 1640 we have seen some evidence of a changing economic and social culture of the sort that Wrightson described as the ‘readjustment of attitudes, interests and social relations in English rural society’.⁴⁷⁰ Some of the factors which led to this ‘readjustment’, including the rise in population, the rapid inflation and the greater competition for land, have been touched on in previous chapters. One of its chief characteristics was the growing polarisation between rich and poor, a feature which was discerned earlier in this chapter in the analysis of probate inventories. Was there really a significant change in the economic and social structure of this marshland parish and what was its nature? What can be learnt of the attitudes, interests and social relations of those whose voices are rarely heard?

Changes in patterns of land holding

It is clear the earliest Marshchapel inventories that, by the mid-sixteenth century, that there was considerable inequality in the size of landholdings. Christopher Dyer shows that this was a national trend, which was long term and irreversible, and began well before the sixteenth century. He provides an example of Navestock in Essex where in 1222 there were 116 tenants, 59% of whom held four acres or less. By 1553 there were only 55 tenants and by 1840 there were only 25 farms, 48% of which were 100 acres or more.⁴⁷¹ In the sixteenth century, the pace of this trend increased. Rising prices of agricultural products meant that good profits could be made and the growing population provided not only plenty of labour but also a growing market for the produce of the land.

Some yeomen had been able to acquire land and improve their financial and social prospects as a result of the dissolution of the monasteries. Other land became available over time as families died out or failed to maintain their financial position. Fleet argues that, in the Isle of Axholme, the custom of partible inheritance was a significant factor as landholdings were divided up until they were too small to support a family. This, he

⁴⁷⁰ Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680*. p.180.

⁴⁷¹ Christopher Dyer, *An Age of Transition? Economy and Society in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).p.44.

maintains, led to the development of secondary occupations and, often, to the relinquishing of relatively small plots of land which were taken over by wealthier farmers.⁴⁷² This did not seem to be a major factor in Marshchapel where it was usual for the eldest son to inherit the major part of the estate though, as we have seen, fathers tried to make some provision for all their children. Some wealthier farmers bought land, possibly with the intention of being able to provide adequately for younger sons and others prepared younger sons to earn a living by providing them with an education which would qualify them for a profession.

By the time of the 1595, survey the vast majority of the land in Marshchapel was in the hands of a few rich families. Evidence from Marshchapel probate inventories has demonstrated the reality of inflation in the rising valuations of livestock, crops and land and in the growing gap between rich and poor. Walter Harpham was the most obvious and, even an extreme example, of the aspiring yeoman who was accumulating wealth through the acquisition of land. He was the son of a yeoman who died in 1561 leaving goods valued at £88.6s.0d.⁴⁷³ When Walter died 46 years later, he was as described as 'gent'. His goods were valued at more than £1,400, a considerable sum, even allowing for the rapid inflation of the period. His life style would have set him apart from his neighbours. He had a spacious and comfortably furnished home. There was a study with books in it and, in his panelled dining chamber, a pair of virginals. He could afford luxuries and he and his family had time for leisure activities.⁴⁷⁴ As we saw in Chapter Four, Walter showed some consideration and even generosity to the poor in his will, particularly in the way that he seems to have targeted his charity at specific individuals. He may have been taking responsibility for his employees or, perhaps demonstrating an awareness of the needs of his less fortunate neighbours. On the other hand, he left gifts to the 'Right Honourable, my very good friend, Sir William Willoughby', and to other members of the county gentry, which suggests that he sought to identify himself with that social group.⁴⁷⁵

There were six other men who are known to have held more than 50 acres in their home parish and another seven who, if there were documentary evidence available of land

⁴⁷² Fleet, "The Isle of Axholme, 1540-1640. Economy and Society".

⁴⁷³ LAO Inv. 40/86.

⁴⁷⁴ LAO Inv. 102/252.

⁴⁷⁵ L.A.O. L.C.C. Wills 1607 ii, 306.

which they held elsewhere, would probably be found to have held sufficient to be recognised as yeomen. By its very nature, the evidence that land was changing hands in Marshchapel is patchy but it is, nonetheless, convincing. The Harphams appeared in the parish only in the mid-sixteenth century and we know that Walter Harpham had since acquired more land, including that previously owned by Allan Storre. Another example is that of Robert Storre who, in his will dated 1595, refers to ‘all those lands as I lately purchased of John Campion of Marshchapel’.⁴⁷⁶ New names had appeared amongst the lists of landholders by 1613 when evidence was given to the commissioners surveying the marshes. Thomas Phillips, Thomas Hagg, Thomas Nevell were still tenants of Sir Christopher Hilyard’s salt cote holmes and fitties. Thomas Dawson, gent, remained as tenant of George Allington. Thomas Phillips was still among John Hatcher’s tenants but Moses Mumby, Thomas Hammerton and Robert Hurst were new to the parish.⁴⁷⁷

There is also evidence amongst probate documents that some of the incomers to Marshchapel in the first half of the seventeenth century were yeomen or aspiring yeomen who must have been attracted by the availability of land in the parish. Not least of these was George Freshney, yeoman, who died in 1632 leaving goods to the value of £418.3s.3d. He held two leases in Marshchapel and also held land in Kirmington.⁴⁷⁸ Another newcomer was William Riggall, yeoman, who first becomes visible in the parish in 1618 as an appraiser of the inventory of John Hobson, yeoman. At the time of his death in 1642, William was living in Marshchapel on a farm of which he held the lease. He owned two other houses with their land in the parish, occupied by William Johnson and William Maltby. He appears to have owned 12 acres in Wragholme where he also held the lease of a farm and he leased other lands in Wragholme and in Grainthorpe.⁴⁷⁹

A tolerable but by no means an easy existence

While some husbandmen were able to improve their lot and rise to the ranks of yeomen; the less fortunate could be in danger of losing their land and sinking into poverty. We have seen evidence among the Marshchapel documents of husbandmen prospering and rising to the ranks of the yeomanry, but the documents also tell numerous tales of

⁴⁷⁶ LAO H7/13, LAO LCC Wills 1595 i, 78.

⁴⁷⁷ TNA E178 4063.

⁴⁷⁸ LAO Inv. 148/107.

⁴⁷⁹ LAO LCC Wills 1642, 239.

individuals and families falling on hard times. A combination of hard work and good luck or a fortunate marriage could improve the lot of a husbandman or a labourer but his hold on even the basic necessities of life could be precarious. Poor harvests, old age or ill health could quickly reduce him to penury. As we have seen, the Dawson family were long established in the parish and were among the most substantial, but not all branches of the family flourished. When husbandman John Dawson died in 1615, his possessions were valued at £7.15s. and his debts amounted £13.15s.4d. He must have left his widow in poverty. The Skeltons, who had been in the parish, at least, since the first half of the sixteenth century, also fell on hard times. Charles Skelton died in 1549 with goods valued at £64 including 38 head of cattle, 200 sheep and a salt pan.⁴⁸⁰ In 1552 Christopher Skelton was the executor and main beneficiary of his widowed mother's will receiving, amongst other goods, her 'indenture of the grange and my indenture of Mr. Hilyard's grounds with all my other lands'.⁴⁸¹ There is no evidence to suggest that Skeltons continued to hold land in Marshchapel at the time of the survey in 1595. In 1604 the possessions of Christopher Skelton, labourer, were valued at £9 and included three cows and a calf.⁴⁸²

Peter Bowden has calculated that an early seventeenth century husbandman with an arable holding of 30 acres might expect to provide for himself and his family 'a tolerable but by no means an easy existence'.⁴⁸³ A husbandman with more land might hope to take advantage of high prices in years of poor harvest but the smaller farmer's surplus would be wiped out. In times of good harvest when prices were low, the smaller farmer would need to sell his surplus as quickly as possible to produce the income he needed to survive, whereas the wealthier farmer had the means to hold on to his crops until prices rose. Though it is impossible to quantify, the evidence indicates that, between 1540 and 1640, the social structure of Marshchapel was transformed as land became concentrated in the hands of a few rich men and there was a corresponding increase in the number of labouring poor.

Those labourers who had sufficient means at the time of death to warrant a probate inventory would not have been typical of the group as a whole. We have seen evidence

⁴⁸⁰ LAO Inv. 18/228.

⁴⁸¹ LAO LCC Wills 1552-1556, 203.

⁴⁸² LAO Inv. 98/14.

⁴⁸³ Bowden, "Agricultural Prices, Farm Profits and Rents." p.657.

that the position of the labouring population in Marshchapel may have been deteriorating during this period. In 1641 the opinion was expressed that ‘the fourth part of the parishes of England are miserable poor people, and (harvest time excepted) without any subsistence...’ while towards the end of the seventeenth century it was calculated that labourers, cottagers and paupers constituted as much as 47% of the total population.⁴⁸⁴ In the absence of the accounts of the Overseers of the Poor of Marshchapel it is not easy to quantify the extent and degree of poverty in Marshchapel. Though we cannot be certain that people died of starvation, we have found instances in the parish register of individuals who have died, apparently, from ill health brought on by poverty. There is some indication in wills of the scale of poverty and the attitudes to the poor amongst their more prosperous neighbours.

The poor are always with you

Attitudes to charitable giving, to some extent, must always have been a matter of individual personalities but there is evidence, nationally, of a changing relationship between employer and employee during this period. Land became a commodity to be exploited for maximum profit. Some farmers began to see their labourers no longer as their neighbours but as mere employees who could be taken on and dismissed as economics dictated.⁴⁸⁵ We have seen evidence of the growing polarisation between rich and poor in terms of wealth in Marshchapel in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Attitudes are more difficult to detect, but there is evidence of a change in the pattern of bequests in wills and, perhaps even more tenuously, the pattern of debt as recorded in probate inventories, which seem to indicate a deterioration in the sense of neighbourliness, of mutual trust and responsibility.

Charitable giving was not confined to the most wealthy; in wills there were small bequests to the ‘Poor Man’s Box’ from testators who described themselves as labourers. Where there was wealth and few family dependants, legacies to the poor could be more generous and more specific. In the absence of any extant Poor Law records, such wills provide some insight into the extent of the poverty. Walter Harpham, gent, was a man who could afford to give to charity. He left £10 to Marshchapel church, £12 to Lincoln Cathedral and, to the Poor Man’s Box, £10 which was to be invested by the

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.p.598. Everitt, "Farm Labourers." pp.398-399.

⁴⁸⁵ Everitt, "Farm Labourers." pp.438-442

Churchwardens and the income distributed annually for the benefit of the poor. There were also bequests ranging from 2s. to 26s.8d. to nine poor families aimed, specifically, at the bringing up or apprenticing of children. A total of 25 children benefited in this way from Walter's will, though, in some cases, the outcomes may have been disappointing.

Walter left 26s.8d. for the bringing up of 'a wench of Bernard Hart'. Bernard's daughter, Margaret, was then two years old and already fatherless. She was servant to husbandman Thomas Barker at the time of his death in 1625, by which time, Margaret would have been about twenty years old. Thomas bequeathed to her 26s.8d., which seems to be an enormous sum, especially when compared to the 12d. he left to his son, until one realises that it is precisely the amount Margaret received by the terms of the will of Walter Harpham.⁴⁸⁶ It is a handsome figure; Judith Spickley estimated that £20 invested could provide an annual income of £2 in the seventeenth century. The annual wage for a woman in service was between £1 and £2 with room and board.⁴⁸⁷ But the woman with the £20 invested could realise an income of £2, and still have time to work and earn more which, it appears, Margaret Hart was able to do. She lived to marry in 1628 at the age of 23 and went on to have, at least, two children. Her cousin, Robert Hart, was less fortunate. His father, Robert Hart, received 16s.8d. towards putting his son 'to apprentice'.⁴⁸⁸ The young Robert was orphaned by 1616 and died in 1621, described in the parish register as a 'roguish boy', a term which was tempered a little in the bishop's transcript where he was described more charitably as a 'poor boy'.

Another testator who had sufficient resources to respond individually to specific needs was the bachelor, John Hobson, yeoman. At his death in 1618 the bulk of his estate went to his nephew, also John Hobson, though there were some smaller legacies to the children of his niece. He left 33s.4d. to the church and £5 yearly to the poor. In addition he left sums of money to 25 named individuals. Blind Joan South received the largest amount at 7s. but she died 18 months later. John Ibreu, a widower with a two year old daughter, was given 3s., Arthur Till received 2s. Thomas Johnson, also a widower, and Thomas South each received 1s. Amongst the other 20 named poor there were nine

⁴⁸⁶ LAO LCC Wills 1624-5, 176.

⁴⁸⁷ Judith Spicksley, "The Early Modern Demographic Dynamic; celibates and celibacy in seventeenth century England" (PhD, University of Hull, 2001).p.138.

⁴⁸⁸ L.A.O. L.C.C. Wills 1607 ii, 306.

widows and eleven men, each of whom was to be given 4s. on the day of John's burial. They included the now elderly former 'salters', Walter, Arthur and George Ramsley, and a former sailor, Henry Carr. There was also to be a 'penny dole' to be handed out at John's funeral to those poor not named in the will.⁴⁸⁹

Fig 5.5 The changing pattern of legacies to church and charity in Marshchapel by decade between 1530 and 1650.

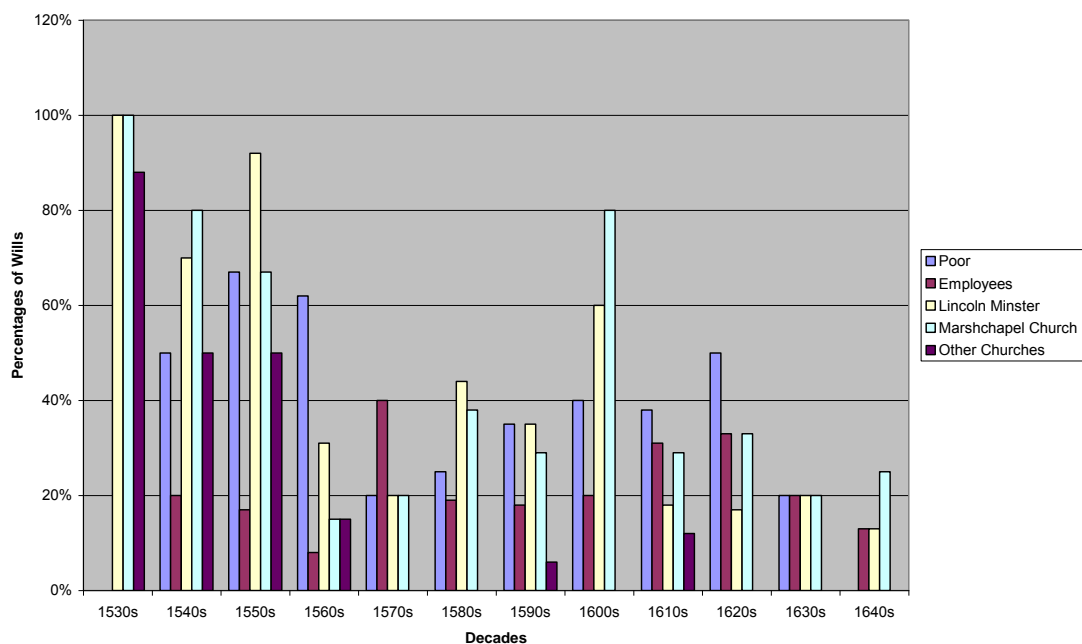


Figure 5.5 illustrates how evidence from the 118 extant wills of Marshchapel parishioners between 1530 and 1650 indicates that there was a significant change in attitudes towards charitable giving in the parish during that period. The main beneficiaries throughout the period were the members of the nuclear family of the deceased, wives and children, parents and siblings. All of the wills of the 1530s included a gift to Lincoln Cathedral and to Marshchapel church and all but one left a small legacy to another church, usually to a neighbouring parish. It is not always possible to know whether a legatee is an employee and this was so in one will of the 1530s but, otherwise, none of the wills of the 1530s included a legacy to an employee or to the poor. It seems likely that the changing attitudes which are apparent in the following decade were influenced by uncertainty occasioned by the religious changes of the 1530s which had affected the area so dramatically. The percentage of wills in which

⁴⁸⁹ LAO LCC Wills 1618 i, 127.

places of worship benefited had fallen to 70% for Lincoln Cathedral, 80% for Marshchapel parish church and only 50% to other churches. At the same time, legacies to the 'Poor Man's Box' had risen to 50% and to employees to, at least, 20%. Significantly, in 1547 Edmund Cowper left a sum of money for a priest 'for to singe for my soule and for my gudd frends soules and for all suffering soules... for one quarter of a yere yf the kings busnes will admytt ytt' and if not then he required his son to 'dispose yt among poore people'.⁴⁹⁰

The shift away from legacies to the church and towards the poor and employees continued during the 1550s and into the 1560s when 62% of wills included a donation to the poor while at least 8%, and possibly as many as 38%, left a gift to one or more employee. These were the years when altars were being stripped of items such as candlesticks, bells and thuribles which were associated with the now rejected 'popish' beliefs and practices, including the doctrine of transubstantiation in the mass and the veneration of images. The overall trend continued until the 1620s when 50% of Marshchapel wills included a donation to the poor, about 33% to employees, 17% to Lincoln Cathedral, 33% to their own parish but none to neighbouring parishes. By the 1630s there seems to have been a general decline in charitable giving when the poor, employees, Lincoln Cathedral and the parish church all benefited in 20% of wills while no other church received a mention.

There was a new tendency apparent in Marshchapel in the 1630s and 1640s which may have been influenced partly by local circumstances. Instead of being donated to the church for its maintenance or its furniture, as had previously been the norm, legacies were given directly to the cleric, in this case the vicar, Theodore Squire. He first signed the Marshchapel parish register in 1630, replacing Arthur Dawson who had been curate since 1600. Close family members had always been the main beneficiaries of wills and this was more than ever true in the 1640s when only 25% of the wills included a legacy to the parish church or clergy, while the cathedral and employees each benefited from 13% of wills and the poor received nothing. We have seen how, earlier in the century, wealthier members of the parish, the Harphams, the Storrs and Ursula Mills, left sums

⁴⁹⁰ LAO LCC Wills 1547-9/83.

of money which were still benefiting the poor in the eighteenth century.⁴⁹¹ By the mid-seventeenth century, there was no mention of the poor in the wills of the new generation of wealthy yeomen such as William Riggall, Walter Campion, John Crowston and Sylvester Wood.⁴⁹² This is a significant change. It might indicate that the Poor Law was working effectively in Marshchapel by this time. It might also indicate that there was a change in the attitude of the ‘better sort’ to their poorer neighbours, that there was no longer a sense of that mutual trust and responsibility that appeared to have been a feature of the early sixteenth century.

Education and literacy

As an appraiser of inventories in 1641, yeoman William Riggall left his mark.⁴⁹³ The following year the next generation, his sons and his sons-in-law, were able to sign their names as witnesses to his will.⁴⁹⁴ Education was another manifestation of the way in which the yeomanry were moving away from their less prosperous neighbours and identifying themselves more closely with their social superiors.⁴⁹⁵ In 1563 Thomas Hagg, husbandman, left to his only son, Bernard, 20 ewes and 20 lambs, ‘my best cotte, my sworde and the indenture that I have of Mr Hillyarde of the farme that I dwell in’ and he added ‘I will that my supervisors do kepe him at scole’. Unusually, this will seems to have been proved a second time, nearly 20 years later.⁴⁹⁶ Perhaps the young Bernard Hagg attended the grammar school which had been established in Louth in the thirteenth century. After the Reformation, it became known as King Edward VI Grammar School and, as such, continues to the present day. The education available in Louth could have prepared Bernard for university and thus set him apart from the poorer children of the parish. Even if the parents of such children could have spared them from the fields, the cost of equipment and lodgings would have been prohibitive.

When Bernard died in 1595 he was described as ‘yeoman’ by the neighbours who appraised his goods. He left to his elder son, Thomas, the lease of the farm that he had inherited from his father and to his second son, Robert, he bequeathed £10 ‘for the

⁴⁹¹ Lincoln Charities 1819-1837, in *Charity Commission Report*.p.436. Ian Burgess-Personal communication.

⁴⁹² LAO LCC Wills 1642, 239, LAO LCC Wills 1647-8, 89, LAO LCC Wills 1650, 245, LAO LCC Wills 1652, 243.

⁴⁹³ LAO LCC ADMON 1642/37.

⁴⁹⁴ LAO LCC Wills 1642, 239.

⁴⁹⁵ Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680*. pp.224-225.

⁴⁹⁶ LAO LCC Wills 1563-6, 49, LAO LCC Wills 1581, 99.

better procuring of his degree at the university'.⁴⁹⁷ To those who could afford it, university education gave entry to the culture of the gentry. Providing a university education had, also, become one way in which rising yeomen gave younger sons opportunities to join the professions, often the church, where they could maintain an appropriate social status without being substantial landholders. We saw in Chapter Four that Robert Hagg, son of a yeoman, became a clergyman and was schoolmaster in Marshchapel by 1604 and, three years later, curate in Grainthorpe. In 1604 there were schoolmasters in other nearby parishes, including Fulstow, North Somercotes, Covenham St Mary's, and Ludborough but that provision may have been intermittent. In 1617 William Storre left £20 'to be sett forth by two of the sufficientest men of the towne accordinge to the statute and the increase thereof to be given to the maintenance of a schoolmaster yearlie in Marshchapple ... provided allwaies that the poore children may bee freeilie taught soe many as the two sufficientest men shall think good of in their discretions & the same to bee continued forever'.⁴⁹⁸

Educational opportunities for girls were limited in availability and in scope, especially after the closing of the convents.⁴⁹⁹ A man such as Walter Harpham might have provided a tutor for his daughter, but there is no evidence that this was the case. There is one Marshchapel document which demonstrates that provision was sometimes made for the education of a daughter. Robert Empson, yeoman, bequeathed to Mary Dowlman part of a legacy that her mother, Ann Dowlman, had left her and, in addition, there was another £2 which Ann had left for her daughter's education and which was due to be paid on the 11th November that year.⁵⁰⁰

Cressy estimated that adult male illiteracy would have been about 80% and female illiteracy close to 95% at the accession of Elizabeth. The Protestation Returns of 1641-4 have been used to assess the state of adult male literacy in England in the mid-seventeenth century. An individual would be categorised as illiterate if he left his mark rather than signing his name. Returns survive for Marshchapel and Fulstow but, as all the names are written in the same neat hand, they cannot be used for the purpose. Cressy

⁴⁹⁷ LAO LCC Wills 1595 i, 44.

⁴⁹⁸ LAO LCC Wills 1617 ii 248.

⁴⁹⁹ Jacqueline Eales, *Women in Early Modern England 1500-1700*, ed. David Birmingham, *Introductions to History* (London: Routledge, 2003).pp.35-46.

⁵⁰⁰ LAO LCC ADMON 1616/167.

analysed the surviving returns for the whole country and calculated illiteracy rates based on those returns that are usable in this way. The signatures and marks of more than 40,000 men from over 400 parishes in 25 counties indicated that, on the eve of the Civil War, the average male illiteracy rate for England was 70%. The level of illiteracy varied from parish to parish from 94% to 7%. Literacy tended to be higher in towns than in rural areas and especially high in the more prosperous parishes. Different degrees of writing skill varied between different social groups. He concluded that almost all the clergy and the male gentry were literate and about 40% of tradesmen and yeomen while 91% of husbandmen, 88% of women and almost all labourers were illiterate.⁵⁰¹

The average adult male illiteracy figure for Lincolnshire parishes, based on returns from 48 parishes, ranged from 94% to 50% with an average for the county of 73%. Some of Marshchapel's neighbours are amongst those 48 parishes in Lincolnshire with usable returns. Within Louthesk Hundred where Marshchapel is situated, the average parish male illiteracy rates ranged from 66% to 85%. There seems to be no clear pattern that would offer an explanation for the variation. At Conisholme only 66% left their mark whereas, at Covenham St Bartholomew, the figure was 84%, at Saltfleetby St Clement 81%, at Skidbrooke 70%, at South Somercotes 67%, at Fotherby 82% and at the market town of Louth 74%.⁵⁰²

There was a general increase in the level of education in the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century except among labourers. Reading was taught before writing for boys; girls were rarely taught to write. The rising level of literacy encouraged the publication of cheap literature which was widely distributed by pedlars, hawkers and petty chapmen.⁵⁰³ There is no evidence that such material was readily available in Marshchapel before 1650, but it could be that it was too ephemeral or not sufficiently valuable to be recorded in probate inventories. Books appear in only six Marshchapel inventories, all of them after 1600. There may have been other book owners who left no inventory or it may be those who drew up the inventories thought they were of too little value to include. William Wood had a book with his purse and apparel worth £1 when

⁵⁰¹ David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).pp.106-107.

⁵⁰² Ibid.pp.72-73,197.

⁵⁰³ Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: popular fiction and its readership in seventeenth century England* (London: Methuen, 1981).pp.21-23,111-128.

he died in 1604. His wife, Anne, who was the granddaughter of the wealthy Arthur Washinglay, witnessed his inventory with her mark.⁵⁰⁴ In the study of Walter Harpham, at his death in 1607, there was a table, benches, 'sealinge', a desk and his books together valued at £3.⁵⁰⁵ John Stevenson, yeoman, left a 'service book' with other small items valued at 3s. Thomas Dawson, gent, signed John's inventory; John's wife, Ellen, left her mark.⁵⁰⁶ The inventory of John Hobson, yeoman, was the first to record a bible, which together with his purse and apparel was considered to be worth £4.⁵⁰⁷ In 1620, yeoman Thomas Hagg left 'two little bibles with other books' valued at 16s.⁵⁰⁸ In 1622, William Hill, yeoman, had books in the hall valued at 16s.⁵⁰⁹ William's male witnesses, yeomen and gentlemen, signed their names but his widow left her mark.

Patterns of debt and credit

Lending and borrowing oiled the wheels of commerce and everyday life. Approximately two thirds of the probate inventories for Marshchapel provided evidence of debt. It is not always clear whether the debt is simply a bill waiting to be settled or whether money had been borrowed. There were examples of rent which was due or legacies owing to step children or wards and funeral costs which had to be paid. Debts were often incurred at times of illness. Bachelor John Marflet, whose goods were valued at £15.9s.4d., owed £18.17s.3d., including £1.7s. to William Wood 'for the time he was sick before he departed'.⁵¹⁰ In 1622 Arthur Swabye died with goods valued at £8.6s. but he owed a total of £4 to ten local people and £1 'to the towne' and an additional 10s. which had been 'laid out for the keep of his children and other expenses'.⁵¹¹

Lending for profit was frowned upon until 1571 when legislation was passed allowing the charging of interest. Money was usually borrowed locally from relatives or neighbours. Occasionally, debts were incurred further afield, most often in the surrounding villages or in Louth. Two men who, judging by their possessions would have been husbandmen, owed debts to a Mr. Scales of Great Grimsby. Robert Cowper, whose goods were valued at £24.1s.4d., had debts amounting to £11.16s.4d. and John

⁵⁰⁴ LAO LCC Admons 1604/227.

⁵⁰⁵ LAO Inv. 102/252.

⁵⁰⁶ LAO LCC ADMON 1618/189.

⁵⁰⁷ LAO Inv. 122/7.

⁵⁰⁸ LAO Inv. 123/305.

⁵⁰⁹ LAO LCC ADMON 1622/106.

⁵¹⁰ LAO Inv. 82/323.

⁵¹¹ LAO LCC Admons 1622/156.

Short, with goods valued at £24.17s.4d., had debts of £42.17s.⁵¹² What is particularly striking is that a change seems to have come about after 1600 when it became more usual to formalise borrowing and to secure a loan 'upon a bond'. This may reflect the more lenient attitude towards charging interest as well as being a response to inflation. It may also be a further manifestation of the changes taking place in social interaction, the break down of mutual trust and neighbourliness.

Lending money was a way of investing ready cash. We saw above that the wealthier mercer was often a money lender. Daughters were often given cash as their legacy and this became more common during our period. For the wealthier single woman, lending money for profit may have been the only way in which she could secure her economic independence. A sum of £30 invested wisely could provide a 'tolerable living standard' for a woman in the early seventeenth century. An income such as this could improve the marriage opportunities for a woman. It might also make marriage a less attractive option for her as she would lose her financial independence when her possessions became the property of her husband.⁵¹³

Of the 14 extant probate inventories of Marshchapel women who died before 1650, at least 11 belonged to widows and one to a spinster. The remaining two women were almost certainly unmarried. Three of the widows and one of the unmarried women had lent money. John Dawson, the younger, owed £3.3.4d. to widow, Margaret Skelton, when she died in the early 1550s.⁵¹⁴ At her death in 1616, widow Ursula Milnes was owed £101 'on bonds'.⁵¹⁵ She was the daughter of Thomas Grant and granddaughter of Arthur Washinglay, both of whom had been substantial land holders in Marshchapel. In 1633, Mary Barker, widow of husbandman, Thomas Barker, held bonds to the value of £9.⁵¹⁶ Helen Dales, the only unmarried woman who had lent money, had been a living-in servant of long standing. Apart from the 10s. owing to her by 'her master' her only other asset was the 'bond of £6 for payment of £3.6.8d. due by John Hobson of Cawthorpe'.⁵¹⁷ Cawthorpe, now Covenham is situated on the western boundary of

⁵¹² LAO Inv 74/386, LAO LCC Admons 1581-9/724.

⁵¹³ Spicksley, "The Early Modern Demographic Dynamic; celibates and celibacy in seventeenth century England".pp.138-148.

⁵¹⁴ LAO Inv 21/76.

⁵¹⁵ LAO Inv. 119/439.

⁵¹⁶ LAO Inv 140/36.

⁵¹⁷ LAO LCC Admon 1625/55.

Fulstow. John Dawson, husbandman, went further away to find his loan. In 1615, he owed £3.13.4d. to Widow Windle of Stallingborough ‘upon a bond’.⁵¹⁸

5.6 Religious changes and community cohesion

There can be little doubt that the religious changes which began in the reign of Henry VIII would have had an impact on the experience of community in Marshchapel. The church had been the centre of parish life, a source of stability and common interest. The changes in doctrine, introduced under the Tudor monarchs and continued under the Stuarts, opened the gates for uncertainty and division. It is likely that many of the inhabitants of Marshchapel had shared the attitudes of the Louth rebels in 1536; some may have been actively involved. No doubt there was much talk in the ale houses about the dramatic events of those days and the repercussions. However, it seemed that, by 1642, change had come to be accepted; all adult males in the parish were compliant in taking the Protestation Oath by which they promised loyalty to the king and to the reformed Protestant religion as expressed in the doctrines of the Church of England.⁵¹⁹ More surprising is that in 1676, out of a total of 142 adults in Marshchapel, 25 were reported to be nonconformist.⁵²⁰

Before 1640 the majority of Puritans in England had not separated from the Anglican church. It was the ‘explosion of religious experimentation’ between 1640 and 1660 and the ‘narrowly restrictive religious settlement’ of the Cavalier Parliament ensured that substantial numbers opted out, some forming separate structures.⁵²¹ In the country as a whole at the time of the Compton Census in 1676, between 4% and 5% were found to be failing to attend the prescribed services. The proportion was smaller in Lincolnshire where 2,594, approximately 3% of the adult population, had opted out, but they were not evenly spread. The percentage of nonconformists was highest in the fens and in the marshlands, a feature which has been associated with the distinctive social organisation of these regions. However, Dr Ambler has pointed out, firstly, that there was a tendency for dissenters ‘to cluster in certain areas of the county’ and, secondly, that there were

⁵¹⁸ LAO LCC Admon 1616/19.

⁵¹⁹ W.E. Webster, ed., *Lincolnshire Protestation Returns 1641-1642* (1984).

⁵²⁰ SRO MF91.

⁵²¹ Clive Holmes, *Seventeenth Century Lincolnshire*, ed. Maurice Barley, vol. VII, *History of Lincolnshire* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 1980).p.44.

concentrations of dissenters in other areas of ‘very different milieus’.⁵²²

At almost 18%, the proportion of dissenting adults in Marshchapel was exceptional, even amongst its near neighbours on the coast of north east Lindsey. In North Cotes all 56 inhabitants were recorded as conforming, in Fulstow there were two nonconformists amongst 142 adults, in Conisholme there were two out of 57, in North Somercotes ten out of 219, in South Somercotes three out of 98, at Saltfleet none out of 130 and in the two Covenhams just one papist and no other nonconformists amongst a total of 152 adults. The question of why so many had ‘opted out’ in Marshchapel by 1676 is beyond the scope of this study except in so far as it may be an indication of earlier influences or attitudes. Is there any evidence of nonconformist tendencies in the parish before 1640?

There is clear evidence of dissent in some neighbouring parishes before 1640, particularly centred around the person of David Allen, rector of Ludborough. David Allen entered Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1577 at the age of 17 and received his BA in 1582. The following year he became vicar at Brixworth in Northamptonshire. In 1594 he moved to Ludborough, a parish a few miles south west of Marshchapel. In April 1604, Allen was cited for ‘not wearing the surplisse and not conforminge ... to the use of the ceremonies of the Church in the celebration of divine service and administration of the sacraments according to the book of common prayer’. He, with others, asked for time to ‘deliberate afresh’ and was allowed until the last day of November to conform. The following January, he was admonished for the fourth time and ‘respited’ until the 2nd October 1605 when he failed to appear.⁵²³ He remained in office until his death in 1615. Dudding described him as a determined Puritan and Nonconformist as were, he maintained, many of the neighbouring clergy. Churchwardens were sympathetic and so were reluctant to present them at the Bishop’s Visitation until they were threatened with excommunication. He ‘marvelled at the patience of the church authorities’ but thought that there were not more deprivations because there were so many offenders.⁵²⁴

⁵²² Ibid.pp.43-44.,R.W Ambler, *Churches, Chapels and the Parish Communities of Lincolnshire 1660-1900*, vol. IX, *A History of Lincolnshire* (Lincoln: The History of Lincolnshire Committee, 2000).pp.3,14.

⁵²³ C.W. Foster, ed., *The State of the Church in the Diocese of Lincoln*, vol. 23 (Horncastle: Lincoln Record Society, 1926).pp.363,367.

⁵²⁴ R.C. Dudding, "Ludborough," *Associated Architectural and Archaeological Reports and Papers* 42 (1935).pp.189-220.

There was, at least, one other individual in the area who had sympathy with Allen's views. In 1612 Edward Lacon, gentleman of Tetney, although still healthy in mind and body, decided to draw up his will, he wrote, because he had been considering 'how weak and brickell the state of man's life is in this worlde and not knowinge howe shortley it shall please the lord to call me to his mercie'. Edward, 'First and before all earthlie thinges', committed his 'soule into the handes of Almighty God mye onlie Saviour and Redeemer by whose merrittes and bloude shedding I hope by faith in Christ Jesus to be made partaker of everlastinge lief and Salvation'. He wished for his body to be buried 'in the earthe from whence it came in what place soever it shall please the lord to call me, whether it be in churche or churchyard it is not material'. Edward bequeathed £350 to his son, Thomas, and who was to be paid £10 every quarter for his maintenance at university or otherwise. Edward went on to write, 'my will is that he shall be directed by Mr Allen of Ludburghe. I give to David Allen £3.6s.8d. also my desire is that there maye be at my funeral a day of godlie exercise and prayer performed by my good friends Mr Odlin, Mr Humphrey of Graynesbie and Mr Allen of Ludburghe whom I wish may make the conclusion sermon and be performed in the Church at Tetney for the comfortable instruction of those that shalbe present...'.⁵²⁵

In the circumstances, is not stretching the evidence too far to assume that Edward is indicating that it is not necessary to be buried within the boundaries of the church, as had been customary. If he has not fully broken away from the Anglican church, he appears to be distancing himself from it. For the funeral, it appears, the church building was to be used as a convenient space to house the congregation in comfort, rather than for any purely religious reason. It would be a long day. The 'godlie exercise' or 'prophesyings' involved two, three or four sermons on the same text followed by discussion or 'disputation'. Such 'combination lectures' were controversial, especially if the 'disputation' were in public in the presence of the 'unlearned', and they had been suppressed by Queen Elizabeth in the 1570s.⁵²⁶ Presumably, Edward Lacon believed that Mr Richard Odlin, vicar of Tetney, and Mr Thomas Humphrey, vicar of Grainsby,

⁵²⁵ LAO LCC Wills 1615, 150.

⁵²⁶ Patrick Collinson, John Craig, and Brett Usher, eds., *Conferences and Combination Lectures in the Elizabethan Church: Dedham and Bury St Edmunds 1582-1590*, vol. 10, *Church of England Record Society* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003).p.xxviii.

were of similar persuasion, though the latter had been ‘discharged upon a certificate’ of his conformity ‘without subscription required’ in 1604.⁵²⁷

There seems little doubt that Marshchapel parishioners would be aware of these attitudes though there is no firm evidence that they shared them. In the absence of Churchwardens’ Accounts, the best available source for detecting changing attitudes to religion in Marshchapel, as in most parishes, are the wills. There has been much discussion about the value of wills as historical documents and, in particular, the significance of the preamble to wills in reflecting the attitudes of the testators.⁵²⁸ Most of the wills were written by scribes, often the local clergyman, who may have influenced the form of the preamble. The preambles were often formulaic and may have reflected a fashion of the time. However, it is likely that testators would choose scribes whom they believed to be in sympathy with their own views and, in many cases, would be able to influence what was written on their behalf. There is also the possibility that many did not know what to think or they might have considered it wise to hedge their bets. While we cannot be sure that the preamble of every will reflects the religious views of the testator, a study of the wills of a parish can provide some insight into the prevailing attitudes and the response to the changes which were taking place at national level and this is no less true of the wills of the testators of Marshchapel.

Only one of the testators of the 17 extant wills for Marshchapel drawn up before the end of the reign of Henry VIII varied from the traditional Catholic bequest of the soul to ‘Almighty God, Our Lady Saint Mary and all the company of Heaven’. The one exception was William Person who, in January 1541, used the shorter form, leaving his soul simply ‘to Almighty God’. As he also requested ‘that there be an obytt for me in Marshchapel during the life of Anna my wyffe yerely’, he still held the traditional Catholic belief in the doctrine of Purgatory and the power of prayer in the salvation of the soul.⁵²⁹ Until 1547, it was common practice for Marshchapel testators to leave bequests for masses or other prayers for their souls and those of their friends and

⁵²⁷ Foster, ed., *The State of the Church in the Diocese of Lincoln*.p.369.

⁵²⁸ Margaret Spufford, "Religious Preambles and the Scribes of Villagers' Wills in Cambridgeshire, 1570-1700," in *When Death Do Us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*, ed. Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans, and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2000).pp144-157. Caroline Litzenberger, *The English Reformation and the Laity: Gloucestershire, 1540-1580*, ed. Anthony Fletcher, John Guy, and John Morrill, *Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁵²⁹ LAO LCC Wills 1541, 34.

sometimes their neighbours. The last of such wills was that of Edmund Cowper quoted above, and even he was aware that it might conflict with new religious policies.⁵³⁰ During the reign of Edward VI the shorter form of the preamble, as used by William Person in 1541, became common. This may indicate that the people of Marshchapel were gradually accepting the new doctrines or, possibly that, in a time of uncertainty, they were playing safe. Three of these wills were drawn up in March and April 1553, within days of each other, which suggests that the testators may have been victims of plague or some other epidemic and that their wills were prepared with some urgency.

Of the six extant wills drawn up during the reign of Mary Tudor, four referred to Our Lady and all mentioned the ‘company of Heaven’. The two wills in which Our Lady was not named belonged to two Dawson brothers, members of one of the most substantial established families in the parish. The traditional Catholic preamble had featured in their father’s will in 1539 which was witnessed by Sir Robert Dawson, curate, who may have been a family member.⁵³¹ In 1556 Charles Dawson bequeathed his soul to ‘Almighty God and the holy company of Heaven’. The following year, his brother John went one step further towards an expression of Protestant belief when he committed his soul to ‘God the father almighty *and his son Jesus Christ who has redeemed me* and all the blessed company of Heaven’[My italics].⁵³² A month later, in January 1558, Walter Cowper was the last Marshchapel testator to use the original formula, including Mary as well as the ‘holy company of Heaven’ in the preamble to his will.⁵³³ He was a member of another long established and substantial local family. Following the accession of Elizabeth, it became increasingly common for Marshchapel testators to omit any reference to the saints and to commit their souls to ‘God almighty, my maker and redeemer’ or ‘my maker, redeemer and sanctifier’. By the end of the reign it had become the conventional formula, though such phrases as ‘trusting to be saved by the merits of Christ’ began to be added with increasing frequency. There was no longer any need to pray to Our Lady or the other saints, indeed, such ‘popish’ practices would be frowned upon.

⁵³⁰ L.A.O. L.C.C. Wills 1547-9/83.

⁵³¹ LAO LCC Wills 1538-40, 320.

⁵³² LAO LCC Wills 1552-6, 106, LAO LCC Wills 1558 ii, 90.

⁵³³ LAO LCC Wills 1558 i, 136.

There are very few wills where it has been possible to identify the scribe with any certainty. Arthur Dawson, curate of Marshchapel from about 1600 until his death in 1629, witnessed many wills at the beginning of the seventeenth century and may also have acted as scribe. The formula that became common in Elizabeth's reign continued to be employed with slight variations throughout his ministry. He was replaced in 1630 by Theodore Squire, who seems to have served as Vicar for Fulstow and Marshchapel until 1645. One of his first tasks in his new post must to have been to act as the only witness and, therefore, also the scribe in the drawing up the will of Thomas Sparke, labourer. Perhaps Theodore influenced, or even composed, the preamble in which Thomas commended his soul 'into the hands of God my Heavenly father *hoping for salvation onely through the meritorious sacrifice of my deare redeemer*' [My italics].⁵³⁴ This is a form of wording which is more clearly Protestant, adding emphasis to the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

There are some wills where the preamble appears to be more personalised, usually belonging to the wealthier testators. This may have been because they were able to write or because they could afford to pay a scribe whatever was necessary to express a personal view. In 1569 gentleman John Maddison, uniquely, prefaced his will, 'I ordaine and declare this my last will and testament containing the dispocision of such things as almighty god in his great mercie and goodness hath lente me and ----- me with all in this transitory life'. He then went on 'First and principally I commend and bequeath my soul to Almighty God, my maker, saviour and redeemer and sanctifier who I truste will save me at the dreadfull daie of Judgement and I trust will of his great mercye forgive me of all my sinnes and offences'.⁵³⁵ In 1585 Arthur Washinglay was equally fulsome. He commended his soul 'unto almightie god my creator and to Jesus Christ my onlie and alone saviour and to the holly ghost my sanctifier, three persons in trinity and one trew and verie god in deytie by whom and through whose mercy I hope to be saved amonge god's elect'.⁵³⁶ The use of the expression 'god's elect' is often associated with a more radical form of Protestantism.⁵³⁷

⁵³⁴ LAO LCC Wills 1630-1, 150.

⁵³⁵ LAO LCC Wills 1569 i, 44.

⁵³⁶ LAO LCC Wills 1585 ii, 89.

⁵³⁷ Margaret Spufford, *Contrasting Communities: English Villagers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Guildford: Sutton Publishing, 2000).p.336.Margaret Spufford, *Figures in the Landscape: Rural Society in England, 1500-1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000).p.39.

The third of such wills which deserves a mention is that of Walter Harpham. He signed his will to the effect that he had written it himself in the presence of Paul Cooke and William Watson, neither of whom appears to be a Marshchapel man. The preamble to his will is even more elaborate than those of John Maddison and Arthur Washinglay. Walter commended ‘by fervent and zelous praier my soule unto the mercifull pleasure of almightie god faithfully trusting and steadfastly believing by the onely and ----- and satisfaction which it hath pleased my holy redeemer, Jesus Christ, to make for me upon the crosse to have full redemption and free remission of all my sinnes and by meanes therof to be one of the faithfull, righteous and adopted number to whom in his goodness and great mercie he shall say (whome all flesh shall appear unto in judgement) Come ye blessed of my father and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world and do commit and appoint this earthly tabernacle of my body upon the separacon and departure of life from the same unto his like earth to take his consummacon when it shall please almightie god of his goodness to appoint the same’.⁵³⁸ Does this reflect Walter’s sincere and pious belief, is he giving good example to the lesser mortals or is it, perhaps, deemed to be appropriate to his status as a gentleman? Did Walter Harpham have Puritan inclinations?

It is noteworthy that Walter Harpham committed his ‘earthly tabernacle’ simply to ‘the earth’ rather than to the church of Marshchapel or its church yard which was most common in Marshchapel in the century between 1540 and 1640.⁵³⁹ Up until the mid-1550s, a little over half of the testators chose to be buried inside the church. This was likely to be more costly than being buried in the church yard. It would have caused some inconvenience when the floor of the church had to be dug up and replaced and it was not unusual for the smell of rotting corpses to pervade parish churches.⁵⁴⁰ It may be that by the mid-sixteenth century, the local clergy discouraged burial inside the church in Marshchapel. From then until 1650 the majority chose to be buried in the church yard but there were exceptions, chiefly among the elite. Perhaps Bernard Harpham, a rising yeoman, was conscious of his social status when, in 1561, he chose to be buried within the church.⁵⁴¹ In 1585 Arthur Washinglay, probably the wealthiest man in Marshchapel

⁵³⁸ LAO LCC Wills 1607 ii, 306.

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁰ David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).p.463.

⁵⁴¹ LAO LCC Wills 1562, 151.

at that time, also elected to be buried inside the church.⁵⁴² Bernard Hagg, yeoman, wanted to be buried in the church, next to his wife.⁵⁴³

The earliest Marshchapel will to survive in which the testator did not specify that he wished to be buried within the bounds of the parish church is dated 1569 and is that of John Maddison, gentleman, who required that his body should be returned to ‘the earth from whence it came’.⁵⁴⁴ Having gentry connections, perhaps he was more exposed than most of his neighbours to outside influences; the Protestant view was that there was no need to be buried in hallowed ground for ‘Wheresoever we are buried, we are buried in the Lord’s earth’. The phrase used by John Maddison next appears again in wills drawn up 15 years later, this time in those of the two husbandmen, Thomas Nevell and Robert Dawson.⁵⁴⁵ From that time, 13 of 35 wills did not specify that the testator wished to be buried in the parish church or churchyard. The 13 included the wills of two married couples. In 1617, ten years after the death of her husband, Walter, Anne Harpham’s nuncupative will committed her body ‘to the grave’. This may indicate that it was no accident, but rather a matter of family conviction. Anne appears to have been living in her son-in law’s house at the time of her death.⁵⁴⁶ In 1624, Thomas Barker committed his body ‘to the earth from whence it came’ and nine years later his widow, Mary Barker, requested that her body should be buried ‘in the place it should please God to appoint’.⁵⁴⁷ This may indicate that these testators had distanced themselves from the Anglican church, although they may have continued to use some of its services and facilities, perhaps forming what has been described as ‘a congregation within a congregation’.⁵⁴⁸

It seems that Marshchapel may have remained faithful to the old religion longer than some parishes in Cambridgeshire and in the south west of England. In Willingham, for example, Spufford found evidence in dedicatory clauses of a strong emphasis on justification through Christ’s merits alone as early as the 1540s, 20 years before this

⁵⁴² LAO LCC Wills 1585 ii, 89.

⁵⁴³ LAO LCC Wills 1595 i, 44.

⁵⁴⁴ LAO LCC Wills 1569 i, 44.

⁵⁴⁵ LAO LCC Wills 1594 i, 21, LAO LCC Wills 1594 i, 68.

⁵⁴⁶ LAO LCC Wills 1618 ii, 121.

⁵⁴⁷ LAO LCC Wills 1624-5, 176, LAO LCC Wills 1633, 374.

⁵⁴⁸ Holmes, *Seventeenth Century Lincolnshire* p.43.

became apparent in Marshchapel.⁵⁴⁹ In most of the parishes of the South West, Whiting found that support for the old religion had already begun to decline by 1547 and, during Edward's reign, it 'experienced a devastating collapse'.⁵⁵⁰ The destruction of Catholicism 'proceeded more rapidly in the South-East (Kent, Suffolk, Norfolk) than in the North (Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire)'.⁵⁵¹ However by 1570, Whiting concludes, 'the Reformation may have been less a transition from Catholicism to Protestantism than a decline from religious commitment to conformism and indifference. ... Outside the Protestant and Catholic strongholds lay extensive areas of uncommitted territory. In these, throughout the subsequent decades, the rival forces would strive for mastery'.⁵⁵²

Holmes indicated that nonconformity flourished in the marshes and fens, possibly because of the lack of a resident lord or because of resentment at the central government lack of respect for their traditional economy and legal rights. However, if the argument presented above has any validity, it suggests that some of those who were espousing the more radical ideas were amongst the more wealthy and, therefore, not those who were most vulnerable to those changes. Other theories have been offered to explain why nonconformity should occur in one place rather than another. Parishes with multiple lordships or non resident lords, which were likely to be less tightly controlled, may have been more vulnerable. The presence of a school should have led to increased literacy and made dissenting literature available to more people. A clergyman with radical views may have influenced the views of his flock. Different economic backgrounds of communities and individuals made a difference to the spread of nonconformist ideas.⁵⁵³ Spufford's study of Cambridgeshire parishes led her to believe that none of these provided a satisfactory explanation. She came to the conclusion that nonconformity was more likely to have flourished in larger settlements. By their nature, larger settlements were more likely to have less manorial control, more schooling and more people to be

⁵⁴⁹ Spufford, *Contrasting Communities: English Villagers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*.p.248.

⁵⁵⁰ Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People: Popular religion and the English Reformation*, ed. Anthony Fletcher, John Guy, and John Morrill, *Cambridge Studies in Early Modern History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).p.145.p.259.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*p.265.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*p.268.

⁵⁵³ Holmes, *Seventeenth Century Lincolnshire*, Spufford, *Contrasting Communities: English Villagers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People: Popular religion and the English Reformation*.151-261.

converted. She was surprised to discover that the clergy seemed to have had little success in their attempts to influence the views of their flocks.⁵⁵⁴

Evidence from wills shows clearly that the people of Marshchapel were aware of the series of changes in religious doctrine and practice imposed by the Tudor and Stuart governments. For many, there must have been doubts where once there had been certainty and the authority of the local clergy may have been undermined. Though the evidence for nonconformity in Marshchapel is tentative, Puritan attitudes and beliefs may already have been prevalent by 1640 and the seeds for the unusually high concentration of nonconformists in Marshchapel in 1676 may have been sewn in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Further research might answer the question of why this should have been so. Was it the marshland environment, its distinctive social structure, its mobile population or, perhaps the presence of certain individuals, which had encouraged the concentration of dissenters in the parish? Even if there were no outright conflict, religious division must have contributed to some erosion of the sense of neighbourliness and community that had been provided by the common experience of a shared faith and a major focus for the communal life of the parish.

5.7 Summary

By 1640 the parish of Marshchapel was still divided between two main lordships. The Hilyards continued to hold their lands there, but the Willoughbys had sold to the Hatchers of Careby. The lands of the former Louth Abbey and smaller holdings of other religious houses had been dispersed. Most of the land was in the tenure of local men, the terms of their leases having been changed from copyhold to leasehold. Marshchapel continued as a mainly pastoral economy with sheep being the major source of income. The presence, in probate inventories, of increasing numbers of spinning wheels suggests that Marshchapel farmers were responding to the demands of the thriving textile industry. There is little evidence available to indicate changes in farming methods, though horses had largely replaced oxen and 600 acres of land had been reclaimed. The turning away from the sea, which had begun in the Middle Ages continued in the hundred years after 1540 so that, by 1640, the sea played only a minor role in the economic life of the parish.

⁵⁵⁴ Spufford, *Contrasting Communities: English Villagers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*.pp.318.

Though the underlying structures of the social system as it was in 1540 remained in place, there were significant changes within that framework in the century that followed. Inflation helped to provide good profits for the rich but exacerbated the problems of the poor. It is clear from the 1595 survey that the vast majority of land had already become concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy yeomen and minor gentry. Some of the more successful husbandmen survived and some managed to acquire more land and raise their status to become yeomen. Others became impoverished and, unable to pay their rents, joined the growing ranks of landless labourers. Most of the craftsmen and tradesmen were also small farmers; the dual income increased their chances of maintaining their livelihood. By 1640, landless labourers and the poor may have constituted up to half of the population of the parish.

This increasing disparity in wealth affected social cohesion in the parish. As the rich grew richer, they began to identify themselves, in terms of their social and economic status as well as their education and culture, with gentry families outside the parish. The changing pattern of bequests in wills suggests that, over the period of study, the more substantial members of the community of Marshchapel showed less concern than their predecessors for the welfare of their poorer neighbours. Whether this was, in part, an unintended consequence of the introduction of the new Poor Law must remain a matter of conjecture for Marshchapel, especially in the absence of any Poor Law records. However, as Wrightson has proposed, the introduction of the Poor Law can only have exacerbated any tension between rich and poor as the rate payers became responsible for financing and administering relief for their poorer neighbours.⁵⁵⁵

The to and fro of religious changes under successive monarchs may also have contributed to a break down in the sense of the community. A study of their wills suggests that religion was important to the inhabitants of Marshchapel. Clearly, they were aware of the policies of the central administration and influenced by contemporary trends in religious conviction. The later fracturing of Protestantism must have caused further division and conflict. The fact that an unusually high percentage of nonconformists was recorded in the census of 1676 suggests that there were unique factors at work in Marshchapel. There is tentative evidence that similar factors may

⁵⁵⁵ Local identities p.35

have influenced the attitudes of the people of Marshchapel in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

The changes in the society and economy which took place between 1540 and 1640 turned Marshchapel from a medieval to a modern society. The salt industry was an integral part of that society and subject to the same forces of change. The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw the end of the industry which had been a feature of life in the area for hundreds of years. In Chapter Six we look at the history and organisation of the industry and the techniques employed. The role and status, within the community, of those involved in salt making are revealed and the reasons for the demise of the industry are explored.

A Seasoning of Salt

6.1 Introduction

No study of the economic and social changes that took place in Marshchapel between 1540 and 1640 would be complete without reference to the salt industry. Salt making is known to have been a feature of life in north east Lincolnshire for more than two millennia before it came to an end in the early seventeenth century. Marshchapel owed its existence to salt making, the industry shaped the topography of the parish and was an important economic resource from the earliest days of settlement. In telling the story of salt making and the role of the industry in the economic and the social life of Marshchapel, this chapter also exemplifies how one coastal wetland community colonised a ‘marginal’ landscape in pursuit of its natural resource of salt.⁵⁵⁶ Over the centuries, some modification of the landscape in terms of dykes and banks, allowed for the development of agriculture. The salt makers contributed to this modification as they left behind them mounds of industrial waste, which eventually provided good pasture. By the early seventeenth century, social, economic and demographic pressures upon the community, which have been explored in preceding chapters, brought about the transformation of the landscape and, with it, the end of the salt making industry.

Today, at least in the Western world, salt is readily available and taken for granted. For earlier generations, the availability of salt could be a matter of life and death. Salt is essential to the human body; the average adult contains about 250 grams of salt which must be constantly replaced as it is used up in bodily functions. Wild animals instinctively search out sources of salt; early man, the hunter, would have satisfied much or all of his need for salt by eating animal flesh. Naturally occurring sources of salt, such as brackish pools, would have attracted animals and so provided men with good hunting grounds. Once he had become a farmer and more of his diet consisted of the crops he grew, man needed to find a supplementary source of salt for his domesticated animals as well as for himself. The availability of a salt supply was a matter of life and death.

⁵⁵⁶ Mark Bailey, *A Marginal Economy? East Anglian Breckland in the later Middle Ages*, ed. J.C. Holt, vol. 12, *Cambridge studies in medieval life and thought. Fourth series* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Stephen Rippon, *The Transformation of the Coastal Wetlands: Exploitation and Management of Marshland Landscapes in North West Europe during the Roman and Medieval Periods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for The British Academy, 2000).

Salt occurs naturally throughout the world, but many sources were discovered only with the advent of modern technology. Early man was dependent for his supply of salt upon the availability of salt lakes, brine springs or sea water. Before the arrival of the refrigerator and modern canning processes, salt was essential to our ancestors in the preservation of meat and fish. It was used in making butter and cheese, in dyeing, and in the curing and tanning of leather. It had medical applications: it was used not only to heal physical wounds but, we are told, to alleviate 'heaviness of mind'.⁵⁵⁷ Salt is believed to have been one of the first commodities to be the subject of trading. Wars have been fought over it. Because everyone needed salt, a salt tax has been used by governments as a simple way of ensuring that everyone contributed to state finance.⁵⁵⁸

The scarcity of salt, the almost mystical transformation that takes place as it is extracted from the brine and its remarkable properties may all have contributed to the special regard in which it has been held by societies throughout the world. According to Pythagoras, 'Salt is born of the purest of parents; the sun and the sea'. The Greeks called salt 'divine'. The Romans had a saying, 'Nil utilius sole et sale' – 'There is nothing more useful than sun and salt'. They, too, connected salt with purity. It was a custom for them to place a few grains on the lips of a baby on the eighth day after birth to guard the infant from demons. Perhaps this was the origin of the use of salt in baptism, as formerly, in the Catholic ritual.⁵⁵⁹ Because of its preservative qualities and its ability to prevent decay, salt has been associated with longevity, with friendship and with protection from harm. Even in today's world, the custom of throwing salt over the shoulder as protection from evil spirits lives on in folk memory. Possibly because of its immutability, salt became associated in the Judo-Christian tradition with eternity and immortality and so with the concept of God.

The need for salt would have been a major factor in bringing about the settlement of the north east Lindsey coast. There is archaeological evidence for salt making activity in the area as early as the Bronze Age and for the tenth century. Signs of Roman occupation

⁵⁵⁷ L. Keen, "Coastal Salt Production in Norman England.," *Anglo-Norman Studies* . XI, Proceedings of the Battle Conference. (1988).p.34.

⁵⁵⁸ E. Hughes, *Studies in Administration and Finance 1558-1825 with special reference to the history of salt taxation in England.*, vol. CCXXX, *Economic History Series. No. X* (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press., 1934) pp. 2-4.; pp.2-4. Mark Kurlansky, *Salt: A World History* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002).pp.12-13.

⁵⁵⁹ William Barclay, *Commentary on St. Matthew's Gospel.* (St Andrew's Press, 1975), F.L. Cross, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: O.U.P., 1974).p.119.

have been found in Marshchapel and neighbouring Conisholme and the coast would have been suitable for salt making at that time.⁵⁶⁰ There is documentary evidence that the industry was well established at the time of the Domesday Survey and that it continued throughout the Middle Ages. The quantity and quality of the documentary evidence that is available for the sixteenth and seventeenth century is exceptionally rich compared to the material available for other salt making communities of that period. As well as the parish registers, there are extensive sets of probate documents for the salt making villages in the area. This is especially true of Marshchapel, with the additional extraordinary survey of 1595. The present writer is conscious of the contribution of previous writers to our understanding of salt making in the region, especially that of Rudkin and Owen and, later, Sturman, whose work is reviewed below before a more detailed analysis of some of the documentary evidence provides some new insights into the organisation of the industry, the role and status of those involved, the techniques employed and the reasons why the industry came to an end in the early seventeenth century. But, first, some general background to the history of salt making and the processes involved provides a context against which the salt industry of Marshchapel can be better understood.

6.2 Background to the Salt Industry

Whether the raw material is brine from salt lakes, brine springs or sea water, the basic principle is the same; the application of heat to brine causes the water to evaporate and the crystals of sodium chloride to be precipitated. In warmer climates the power of the sun is sufficient to crystallise the salt, but in northern Europe artificial heat is usually required. Changes in the climate over time would affect the potential for salt manufacture and the viability of techniques that might be employed. The salinity of sea water varies; British coastal water contains, on average, about 3.5% of salt. Salinity can change with the weather; if the water is warmed by the sun, some evaporation will occur. Salinity is likely to be greater in sheltered coves where some solar evaporation may take place and less where sea water is diluted with fresh water from a river. In Britain, most of the sea salt making sites have been found on the south and east coasts, which tend to have a lower rainfall than the west. Inland salt making in Britain was based around the natural salt springs in Cheshire, north Shropshire and Droitwich in Worcestershire. The

⁵⁶⁰ David Robinson, "The North East Coast of Lincolnshire: A Study in Coastal Evolution" (University of Nottingham, 1956).p.3

brine from these springs could be eight times as strong as sea water and so proportionately less energy was required to produce the same amount of salt.

To produce good quality salt from sea water, impurities have to be removed at some stage in the process. Insoluble impurities, such as sand and silt, could be separated from the brine in settling tanks or by filtration but the soluble impurities had to be extracted during the evaporation process. Sodium chloride constitutes the major salt content of sea water and is the substance required to preserve and flavour food. Other salts are present in smaller quantities some of which are more soluble than sodium chloride such as potassium chloride, better known as Epsom salts, and some less soluble, such as magnesium sulphate. The substances that are less soluble than sodium chloride are precipitated out first and collect in the bottom of the receptacle to form a cake, now often known as 'pan scale'. Those that are more soluble were left behind in the liquor when the salt was removed. If they were allowed to crystallise, they would taint the salt with a bitter flavour, which is how they have earned the name 'bittern' in some areas.⁵⁶¹ They also made the salt more hygroscopic, increasing its tendency to form a solid 'cake' and making it less effective for salting food.

In warm climates, as in southern Europe, the heat of the sun was sufficient to achieve the crystallisation of the salt from sea water. Elsewhere, as in northern Europe, solar evaporation could be replaced or supplemented by the use of artificial heat. Methods of reducing the amount of fuel required eventually emerged in northern Europe. The process adopted in Britain involved first achieving a concentrated brine by washing out salt from salty sand before applying heat as above. In a variation of this 'sand washing' process, found in Holland and Belgium but not in Britain, the brine was obtained by washing out the salt from the ashes of burnt peat.⁵⁶²

Solar evaporation was the cheapest and simplest method and, therefore, usually favoured where the climate was sufficiently warm and dry. The technique, as it was applied in some parts of medieval Europe, is illustrated in Georgius Agricola's *De Re*

⁵⁶¹ A.R. Bridbury, *England and the Salt Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press., 1955). pp.6-9; D.M. Grady, "Medieval and Post Medieval Salt Extraction in North-East Lincolnshire," *Lincolnshire's Archaeology from the Air - Occasional Papers in Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, no. 11 (1998).p.83

⁵⁶² Grady, "Medieval and Post Medieval Salt Extraction in North-East Lincolnshire."p.92; Bridbury, *England and the Salt Trade in the Later Middle Ages*. pp.10-15.

Metallica first published in 1556.⁵⁶³ The working site was protected by a sea bank. Sea water was passed through a sluice in the bank and channelled into a series of shallow pits. These structures have become known as evaporation ‘pans’, a term which can be confusing as they bear little resemblance to the range of vessels used in the processes in which heat is applied. The brine remained for some time in each pan or pit to allow for evaporation and, as the brine became more concentrated, it passed into increasingly smaller pits until the sodium chloride crystallised. The salt was scraped up into heaps to dry and to allow some of the bittern to drain away. Salt made by this method became known as Bay salt after Bourgneuf Bay, a major site of salt production in France. The slow evaporation process produced a coarse grained salt. It was considered to be inferior to that produced by some other methods, probably because it was more likely to be contaminated by sand or silt and by the bittern which may have crystallised before draining off. Where the climate is suitable, the basic process is still used today. It was used in warmer parts of Britain to strengthen the brine before the application of artificial heat to complete evaporation. This combination seems to have been practised at a medieval site at Lymington in Hampshire.⁵⁶⁴ Doubt has been cast on the interpretation of a site at Sutton on Sea in Lincolnshire.⁵⁶⁵ It has been suggested that the rectangular structures uncovered there may be the remains of clay extraction pits rather than solar evaporation pans as had been proposed.⁵⁶⁶ It could be that the solar evaporation process was used more widely in Britain than is apparent today; any traces left behind would be much less obvious than those of other methods described below.

Salt made by applying artificial heat became known as ‘white’ salt to distinguish it from ‘Bay’ salt, which was generally considered to be inferior, though much would depend on the care and skill of the salt workers. This process, in its simplest form, was employed extensively on the south and east coasts of England and, notably, in prehistoric and Roman Lincolnshire, especially in the fens around the Wash and further north at Ingoldmells.⁵⁶⁷ A few examples of this process in use into the medieval period

⁵⁶³ G. Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, trans. 1912 Hoover and Hoover (1556). pp.545-558.

⁵⁶⁴ A.T. Lloyd, "The Salterns of the Lymington Area" (paper presented at the Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society, 1967).pp.86-102.

⁵⁶⁵ E.H. Rudkin, "Medieval Salt Making in Lincolnshire," in *Salt: the story of an Ancient Industry: report on the salt weekend held at the University of Essex, September 1874*, ed. de Brisay and Evans (University of Essex: Colchester Archaeological Group, 1974).

⁵⁶⁶ Grady, "Medieval and Post Medieval Salt Extraction in North-East Lincolnshire."p.81.

⁵⁶⁷ F.T. Baker, "The Iron Age Salt Industry in Lincolnshire.," *Lincolnshire History and Archaeological Society Reports and Papers.*, no. 8 (1960), H. Healey, "A Medieval Salt-making Site at Bicker Haven,"

have been identified. One such has been excavated at Parson's Drove in Cambridgeshire; another site at Marshchapel, is considered in more detail below.⁵⁶⁸ The same basic principle underlies the process which produces the well known sea salt of Maldon in Essex.

The 'sand washing' process or 'sleeching', as it was known in Annandale, is believed to have been adopted in south Lincolnshire in the late medieval period. Sites have been excavated at Bicker Haven, Wrangle Toft, and Wainfleet St Mary.⁵⁶⁹ There are also some post-medieval descriptions of the process from which some general principles may be drawn.⁵⁷⁰ Preparation would begin before the spring tides; in some places the beach was harrowed or even ploughed so that the sand would more readily hold the salty water of the high tides. Once the spring tides had fallen, the sand would be left to dry out. The top layer, perhaps two or three inches, of sand and salt-laden silt was raked up, sometimes by hand but often by a horse-drawn scraper like the 'hap' used by salt makers in the Solway Firth, where it was said they scraped up only one eighth of an inch.⁵⁷¹ It has been estimated that, in favourable conditions, it could be possible to obtain a salty silt which was between 50% and 75% saline.⁵⁷²

After collection, the salt had to be washed out of the sand. The filtration unit excavated at Wainfleet was a shallow, rectangular pit, lined with blue clay (Figure 6.1). A layer of

Lincolnshire Salterns: Excavations at Helpringham, Holbeach St. Johns and Bicker Haven (1999.), Tom Lane and Elaine Morris, eds., *A Millennium of Saltmaking: Prehistoric and Romano British Salt Production in the Fenland.*, vol. 4, *Lincolnshire Archaeology and Heritage Reports Series* (Sleaford: Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, 2001), H.H. Swinnerton, "The prehistoric pottery sites of the Lincolnshire coast," *Antiquaries Journal* 12 (1932).

⁵⁶⁸ Phil Andrews, "Romano-British and medieval salt making and settlement in Parson Drove, Cambridgeshire," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, no. 95 (2006), Helen Fenwick, "Medieval salt-production and landscape development in the Lincolnshire Marsh," in *Wetland Heritage of the Lincolnshire Marsh*, ed. Stephen Ellis, et al. (Hull: Humber Wetlands Project, Wetland Archaeology and Environments Research Centre, University of Hull, 2001), C.A.I. French, Excavations at Parson Drove Site 15 Cambridgeshire, in *Fenland Research* 7 (1992), Pollard J, D. Hall, and G. Lucas, "Excavation of a Medieval Saltern at Parson Drove, Cambridgeshire," in *A Millenium of Saltmaking: Prehistoric and Romano-British Salt Production in the Fenland*, ed. Tom Lane and Elaine Morris, *Lincolnshire Archaeological and Heritage Reports* (Sleaford: Heritage trust of Lincolnshire, 2001).

⁵⁶⁹ Healey, "A Medieval Salt-making Site at Bicker Haven."; F. McAvoy, "Marine Salt Extraction: The Excavation of Salterns at Wainfleet St Mary's, Lincolnshire," *Medieval Archaeology* XXXVIII (1994).: R.T. Bannister, "Wrangle Toft," *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* 18 (1983).

⁵⁷⁰ Bridbury, *England and the Salt Trade in the Later Middle Ages*, W. Brownrigg, *The Art of Making Common Salt*. (London: 1748), J. Collins, *Salt and Fishery* (1682), H. Duncan, "On the mode of manufacturing salt from sea-sand or sleet, practised in Annandale, along the coast of the Solway Firth," in *General View of the Agriculture, State of Property and Improvements in the County of Dumfries*, ed. Singer (Edinburgh: 1812).

⁵⁷¹ Collins, *Salt and Fishery*, p.527.

⁵⁷² Healey, "A Medieval Salt-making Site at Bicker Haven." p.98.

peat was placed over the clay lining and there was evidence of a 'box' or timber frame set above it to hold the salt impregnated sand. Water was poured through the sand, the peat acting as a filter through which the salt could trickle in the form of brine. The bottom of the filter bed sloped towards a circular vat, lined with blue clay and turf where the brine would collect.⁵⁷³ Blue clay was used rather than red, perhaps because it was less likely to discolour the finished product. The strength of the brine may have been tested with an egg, as in the Solway Firth.⁵⁷⁴ A fresh egg would float in strong brine; once most of the salt had been washed from the sand, the brine would begin to weaken and the egg would begin to sink, thus indicating that it was time to stop the filtration process. Using fresh water to wash out the salt is said to have produced a better quality final product than if sea water were used. Sea water may have reintroduced some of the unwanted salts which had been precipitated out of the salty silt while it lay on the beach. On the other hand, using fresh water would require more labour and more fuel to produce the same quantity of salt.

After the completion of the filtration process, the waste sand was discarded. Where there is no supporting documentary evidence, it is the presence of quantities of this waste material which has led to the identification of the Wainfleet site, and other similar sites, as examples of the sand washing process. McAvoy describes a 'distinctive band of silts, about 0.7 km wide....essentially mud from which salt had been filtered out – and would once have been heaped into mounds, almost all of which have now been levelled'.⁵⁷⁵ If this is, indeed, an example of the sand-washing process, it would seem that salt water was being used to wash out the sand. Ten pits found there were interpreted as wells or sumps for collecting sea water to be used for that purpose. They had sloping sides and flat bottoms. Pipes, set in deep channels, entered the pits from the seaward side. The sides were lined with clay but the bottoms were unlined which must have allowed fresh or brackish water to mix with the sea water, a feature not easy to explain in the context of sand washing. In the absence of any firm evidence to the contrary, could it be possible that the water was being stored here in settling tanks to produce a cleaner brine in preparation for the evaporation process rather than for sand

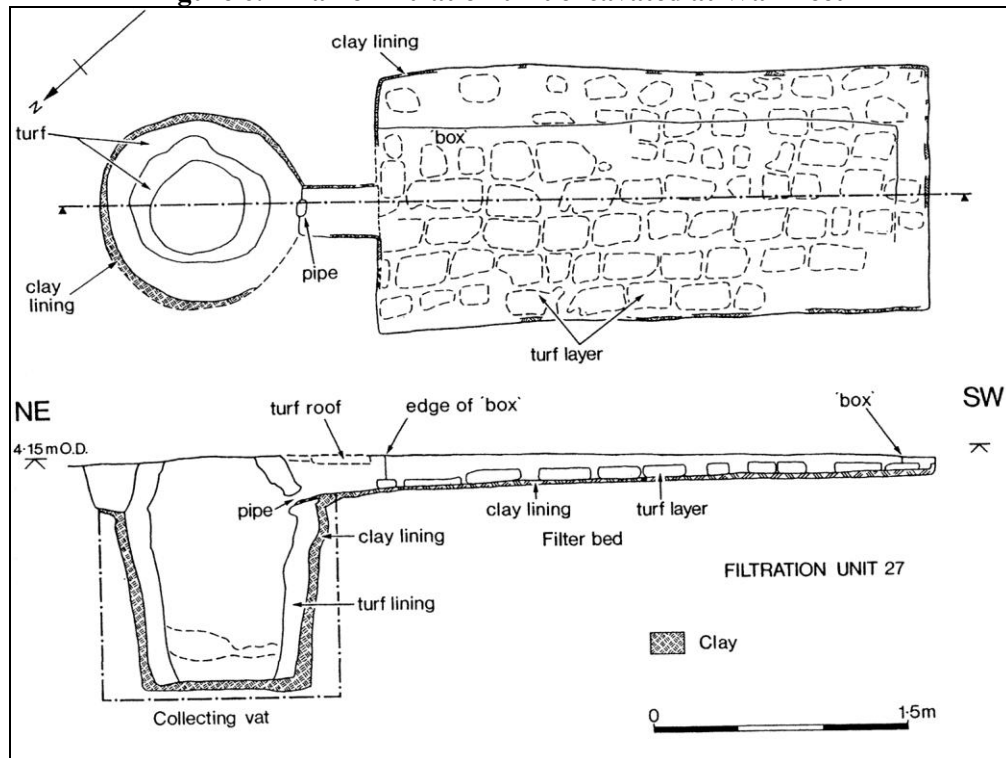
⁵⁷³ McAvoy, "Marine Salt Extraction: The Excavation of Salterns at Wainfleet St Mary's, Lincolnshire.", Bannister, "Wrangle Toft."

⁵⁷⁴ Duncan, "On the mode of manufacturing salt from sea-sand or sleet, practised in Annandale, along the coast of the Solway Firth."

⁵⁷⁵ McAvoy, "Marine Salt Extraction: The Excavation of Salterns at Wainfleet St Mary's, Lincolnshire."pp.134-163.,p.31.

washing? As Grady points out, the size of the mounds are 'atypical' of spoil heaps from other sand washing sites and he concludes, 'there does seem to be a difference between Wainfleet and other salt making sites in the manner of disposal and the scale of production'.⁵⁷⁶

Figure 6.1 Plan of filtration unit excavated at Wainfleet⁵⁷⁷



The concentrated brine was taken on to the evaporation stage. One feature at Wainfleet was identified as a possible hearth but there was no clear evidence that it was associated with the salt making process. Some lead off-cuts were found in layers of burnt material, indicating the probability that lead pans were used. An area of peat found close to the hearth may have been the remains of the fuel supply. The fourteenth century salt making site at Bicker Haven has also been identified as one where the sand washing process was employed, though the characteristic mounds of waste material are not so prominent as elsewhere. Healey maintains that the size of the mounds may not be a reliable indicator of their original dimensions as there is evidence that some material was carted away.⁵⁷⁸ The mounds can be detected in aerial photographs as a pattern of light and dark field markings. There was no evidence of filtration units at Bicker Haven

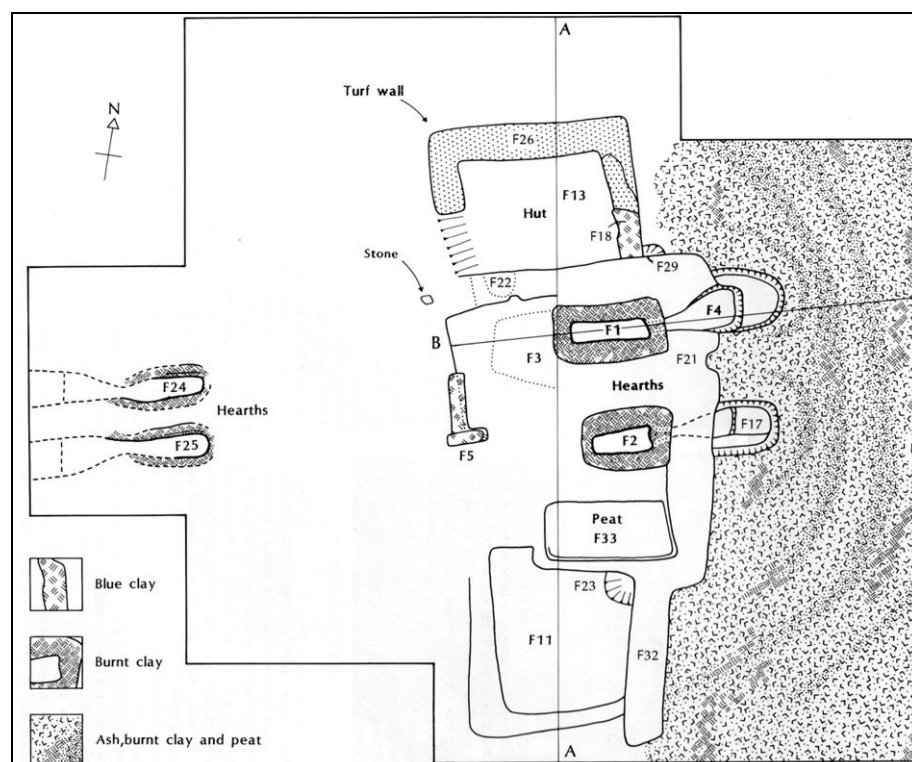
⁵⁷⁶ Grady, "Medieval and Post Medieval Salt Extraction in North-East Lincolnshire." p.192.

⁵⁷⁷ McAvoy, "Marine Salt Extraction: The Excavation of Salterns at Wainfleet St Mary's, Lincolnshire." p140.

⁵⁷⁸ Healey, "A Medieval Salt-making Site at Bicker Haven." pp.82-101.

as at Wainfleet, but rectangular hearths or kilns, each with a stoke hole at one end, were found at various levels in the mounds. One pair of hearths each measured 1.37m in length, 38.1cm in width and 47cm in depth (Figure 6.2). The ashy debris associated with excavated hearths contained the remains of burnt peat and pieces of lead. It has been suggested that the evidence of these two sites may indicate that the filtration and evaporation processes were carried out on separate sites.⁵⁷⁹

Figure 6.2 Diagram of the fourteenth century salt making site at Bicker Haven showing the positions of the hearths and the remains of a building⁵⁸⁰



A further interesting feature of the site at Bicker Haven was evidence of a small rectangular structure close to a hearth. Internally it measured 2.74m by 2.13m. The base of the walls were of sods and on two sides there was the remains of clay. A number of nails found in and around the structure suggest the use of wood. Taken together the evidence indicates a building of mud and stud. Pieces of granite found near the hut may have been used as pad stones. It has often been assumed that such huts associated with salt making sites have been used to house the hearth and the evaporation process. This was apparently not the case at Bicker Haven. Domestic pottery found within and around

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid. pp. 82-101.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 87.

this structure suggested the possibility of human occupation, though it may have been simply a salt workers' hut.

6.3 The literature relating to the salt industry on the Lindsey marshland

Now that the basic principles of the process of salt making in the past have been established, it is time to consider in more detail the literature relating to the salt making sites of Marshchapel and its neighbouring settlements in the outmarsh area between Tetney and Saltfleet in the north east Lindsey marshland. The irregularly shaped mounds, highly distinctive features against the otherwise flat landscape of the marshland between Tetney and North Somercotes, have long attracted the interest of amateur and professional historians. In 1723, Stukeley had written of Lincolnshire, 'upon the sea shore they formerly made salt in great abundance. The hills all along the Sea Bank, the remains of such work, are still called Salt-hills'.⁵⁸¹ It is probable that, as late as the beginning of the 20th century, local folk memory continued to associate these mounds with the salt making industry. Some up to 15ft high and covering an area of about five square miles, they have been estimated to represent eight to ten million cubic yards of silt and sand from which the salt has been removed.⁵⁸² In March 1900 the Reverend Mr. Longley, Rector of Conisholme, described these groups of mounds as 'very partially distributed'. 'They vary considerably in size,' he wrote, 'and in most cases the appearance of the mounds has evidently been altered first by tidal causes and afterwards by ploughing and levelling'. Canon Longley excavated one of the mounds which stood about five or six feet above its surroundings.

... the top being saucer shaped with a dip of about two feet six inches and measuring 21 feet across from brim to brim. On digging into this depression I found a kind of pan about 12 inches thick following roughly the curvature of the outer surface, and formed apparently of puddled clay, which on the underside had certainly been exposed to the action of fire, being quite vitreous in some places.⁵⁸³

Longley believed it was not an isolated case because he had spoken to 'various men' who had found pieces of similar 'pans' whilst ploughing. Longley rightly associated the

⁵⁸¹ E.H. Rudkin and D.M. Owen, "The Medieval Salt Industry in the Lindsey Marshland," *Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society Reports and Papers* 8 n.s. (1960).p.76.

⁵⁸² D.N. Robinson, *The Book of the Lincolnshire Seaside*. (Buckingham: Barracuda Books Ltd., 1981). p.39.

⁵⁸³ T. Longley, "Paper read before members of the Louth Naturalists, and Antiquarian Society," *Louth Advertiser*, 7 April 1900.

mounds with salt making but he interpreted the large feature of puddled clay as a salt pan which would have contained the brine during the evaporation process. In the light of later research, this seems improbable. Longley's explanation of the technique being used may have confused historians for some time. It is no longer possible to locate precisely the mound he studied but two other features of similar description have since been interpreted as a plover decoy and a drinking pond.⁵⁸⁴

It was to be almost a century before any further archaeological work was carried out in the area but progress was being made on another front. The discovery of Haiwarde's map in an auction room in 1933 was, eventually, to provide the key to understanding the process by which these mounds had been formed.⁵⁸⁵ The inscription in a cartouche on Haiward's map of Fulstow and Marshchapel in 1595 was not fully understood until Rudkin and Owen's research into the medieval salt industry in the Lindsey marsh was published in 1960.⁵⁸⁶ It became clear that the mounds which had attracted the interest of Canon Longley were the industrial remains of 'sand washing', and that this was the method used to make salt in Marshchapel and the adjacent parishes at the end of the sixteenth century. Using data from the Domesday survey and references from a range of medieval documents, Rudkin and Owen compiled a 'directory of salting villages' in north east Lindsey. As Marshchapel did not have the status of an independent settlement in 1086, it was not mentioned in the Domesday survey. The salterns recorded for Fulstow, Marshchapel's parent village, must have been situated in what is now Marshchapel. Although Rudkin and Owen stated that 17 salterns were recorded for Fulstow in the survey, the true total is twenty six.⁵⁸⁷

Compared with other salt making sites in Lincolnshire there has been little in the way of archaeological excavation in north east Lindsey but the area is unique in the availability of documentary evidence. The fortunate survival of a group of charters dating from the twelfth to the fifteenth century and of the manorial court rolls of the fourteenth, fifteenth

⁵⁸⁴ Grady, "Medieval and Post Medieval Salt Extraction in North-East Lincolnshire."pp.85-86.

⁵⁸⁵ G.R. Walshaw, "An Ancient Lincolnshire Map," *The Lincolnshire Magazine* 1934-1936.

⁵⁸⁶ Rudkin and Owen, "The Medieval Salt Industry in the Lindsey Marshland.", Walshaw, "An Ancient Lincolnshire Map."

⁵⁸⁷ Rudkin and Owen, "The Medieval Salt Industry in the Lindsey Marshland."p.77. Philip Morgan and Caroline Thorn, eds., *Domesday Book: Lincolnshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1986).

and sixteenth centuries provided evidence of the continuation of the industry.⁵⁸⁸ Rudkin and Owen were able to trace salt making in Fulstow and Marshchapel from 1086 through to the latter part of the sixteenth century and to find further clues to the techniques and organisation of the industry. Evidence from selected sixteenth century probate inventories from Marshchapel and neighbouring parishes helped to identify some of the tools used by the salt makers. They found descriptions of the sand washing process elsewhere, including Leland's sixteenth century description of salt making in north Lancashire, Moneypenny's account from the Solway Firth in the early seventeenth century and Lucas's early eighteenth century description of salt making in Westmoreland. They came to the conclusion that this was the method practised in north Lindsey, at least from 1086 until the early seventeenth century. Theirs was a seminal work but it did contain some misunderstandings arising from incorrect assumptions, for example, that the organisation of the industry and the processes employed remained unchanged throughout the Middle Ages and through to the beginning of the seventeenth century. Rudkin's paper, *Medieval Salt Making in Lincolnshire*, which was delivered to the 1974 conference at Colchester, was based largely on the same research and served to entrench some of the incorrect assumptions.⁵⁸⁹

Sturman's research into salt making in the Lindsey marshland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was published ten years later. His stated purpose was 'to explore certain areas not (or only partially) covered in the earlier survey'.⁵⁹⁰ Whilst acknowledging that there was considerable local variation, he used a number of accounts of the sand washing method in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries from other areas of Britain and France to explore the process in more detail. Notably, he illustrated his exploration of the method with representations of equipment used in salt making in the mid-eighteenth century in Avranchin on the Normandy coast (Figure 6.3). Such analogies can be informative but there is also a danger that they may be misleading. His wide knowledge of the probate records of the north Lindsey parishes of Grainthorpe, Marshchapel, North Cotes and Tetney enabled him to identify many individuals involved in the industry and to begin to describe their roles and economic status.

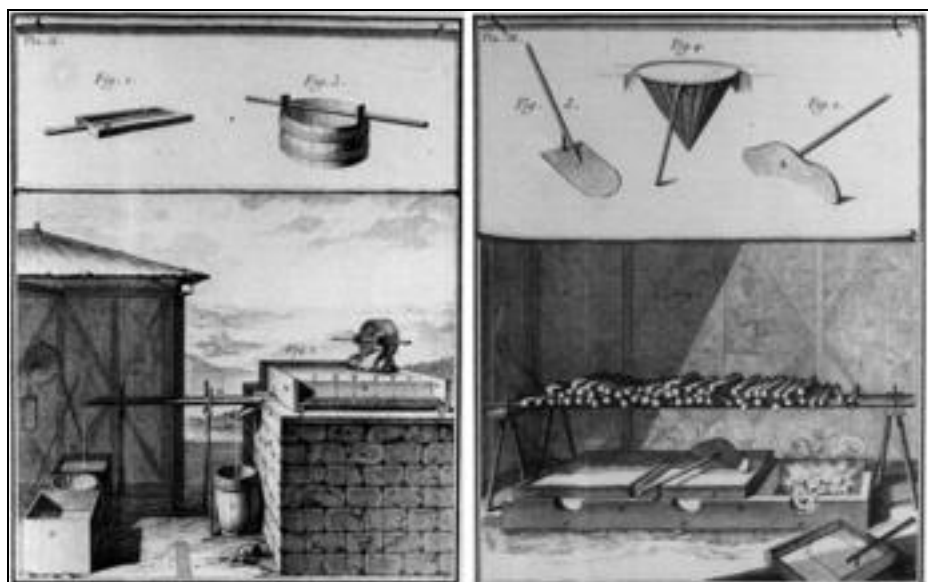
⁵⁸⁸ D.M. Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow," *Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society Reports and Papers*. (1948 -1951).

⁵⁸⁹ Rudkin, "Medieval Salt Making in Lincolnshire," 37-40.

⁵⁹⁰ C.J. Sturman, "Salt Making in the Lindsey Marshland in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries," in *A Prospect of Lincolnshire*, ed. F.N. Field and A.J. White (Lincoln: F.N. Field & A.J. White, 1984), p.50.

Sturman was aided in this, to a limited extent, by another fortunate survival which had not been available to Rudkin and Owen in 1960. He had access to the field books, which had originally accompanied the sixteenth century map of Fulstow and Marshchapel, and which had been rediscovered in 1967 amongst the Banks papers at Revesby Abbey. There is little doubt that a detailed analysis of the field books would have contributed to the ‘much larger study of the communities of the Lindsey marshland’ which Sturman had planned before his untimely death in 1997.⁵⁹¹

Figure 6.3 Drawings of the an eighteenth century filtration unit and hearth at Avranchin in Normandy⁵⁹²



Damian Grady's article, *Medieval and Post-Medieval Salt Extraction in North East Lincolnshire* published in 1998, was an outcome of the Lincolnshire National Mapping Programme Project whose aim was to record archaeological features visible on aerial photographs.⁵⁹³ The project recorded 200 individual mounds between Humberston and Saltfleet in an area sixteen kilometres long by three kilometres wide. However, Grady did not simply provide a record; he attempted to understand the relationship between the various features and to explain them. He was aware of the current state of knowledge regarding salt making on this coast. He described the mounds on the marshland of Marshchapel and neighbouring villages as having a ‘bulbous outline and a dark, possibly wetter centre’. Some of the mounds ‘tend to be dark and irregular’, their shape possibly having been determined by their position near meandering tidal streams. The

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.p.55.

⁵⁹² Ibid.pp.51-52.

⁵⁹³ Grady, "Medieval and Post Medieval Salt Extraction in North-East Lincolnshire."pp.81-95.

large group of mounds in Marshchapel and Grainthorpe are slightly less elongated and irregular. 'This', he says, 'is possibly a reflection of their original position, facing out to the open sea, and the manner in which the salt marsh in front of the active salterns was divided up'. He was unable to date the saltern mounds or to find evidence of filtration units, hearths or huts.⁵⁹⁴

To find answers to the remaining questions, Grady recommended, that further work should be multidisciplinary. It should include more detailed work on aerial photographs followed by fieldwork to locate any remaining salterns and to determine their exact relationship with settlements, sea banks, storm beaches and havens and lead to the identification of suitable areas for excavation. The excavation strategy should be designed to date the salterns and to determine whether the sand washing was the technique used at the time of the Domesday survey. We now know this to be unlikely, in view of a more recent find which is discussed below. Documentary research, he advised, should include a reassessment of Haiwarde's 1595 map of Fulstow and Marshchapel and its accompanying field books, which Grady describes as 'a key document for understanding the medieval salt industry'.⁵⁹⁵

Two small scale excavations in north east Lindsey, which have been described as 'opportunistic' have, nonetheless, yielded significant results and hinted at the wealth of information that might be uncovered if 'a planned programme of excavation' were undertaken. The first of these sites was discovered at Tetney in the early 1990s when ground was being prepared for a new sewage treatment works. Excavation revealed a kiln and an area of saltern debris, including briquetage near a large, natural settling pool. Amongst the debris were hand brick supports, similar to those found on Iron Age sites at Ingoldmells. Carbon dating obtained from charcoal indicated that the site was in use in the late Bronze Age, c 805 BC, making it the earliest saltern recorded in Lincolnshire and one of a very small number of Bronze Age sites found in Britain. The interpretation of the site provided by Palmer-Brown, the author of the report, is rather more complex than might have been expected and the evidence to support it is not explicit in his article. According to Palmer-Brown, at high spring tide the sea water would have entered the pool, where it was left to evaporate naturally. The salty mud would be gathered up and

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid. p.84.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.pp.92-94.

heated to cause the clay particles to become more coarsely granulated so that they could be more easily filtered out. The filtering process would produce a strong brine which would then have been heated in ceramic containers in the usual way.⁵⁹⁶

Figure 6.4 Conjectural reconstruction of Anglo-Saxon salt making site in Marshchapel⁵⁹⁷



The excavation of an Anglo-Saxon site at Marshchapel in 2000, by a group undertaking the Lincolnshire Marsh section of the Humber Wetlands Survey on behalf of English Heritage, was made possible because a local farmer drew the attention of the archaeologists to a field where he had collected pieces of pottery over several years.⁵⁹⁸ The site may date from the tenth century and was possibly in seasonal use for a couple of hundred years. It may even have been one of the 26 Fulstow salterns recorded in Domesday. The evidence seems to indicate that the technique employed in the tenth century was similar to the process found at the medieval site at Parsons Drove in Cambridgeshire.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁶ C. Palmer-Brown, "Bronze Age Salt Production in Tetney," *Current Archaeology*. 12, no. 4 (1993).

⁵⁹⁷ Lane and Morris, eds., *A Millennium of Salting: Prehistoric and Romano British Salt Production in the Fenland*. Front cover.

⁵⁹⁸ S. Ellis et al., eds., *Wetland Heritage of the Lincolnshire Marsh. An Archaeological Survey*. (Humber Wetlands Project, Centre for Wetland Archaeology and Environment Research Centre, University of Hull., 2001).

⁵⁹⁹ Fenwick, "Medieval salt-production and landscape development in the Lincolnshire Marsh."

Figure 6.5 Part of Haiwarde's map showing the position of the Anglo-Saxon salt making site in relation to Sea Dyke Way



Sea Dyke Way runs from north to south through the centre of the map. The 'rounde groundes' which have become good pasture are to the east. To the west is the centre of the village of Marshchapel with the church, which was built about 1400, at its heart. The position of the Anglo-Saxon salt making site is marked with an **S**.

The most recent additions to our understanding of the role of salt making on the north east Lindsey coast attest to the longevity of the industry. The prehistoric site at Tetney provided the first clear evidence of salt making activity in the area as early as the late Bronze Age.⁶⁰⁰ We cannot be certain that the industry continued without a break to the beginning of the seventeenth century, but the excavation of the Anglo-Saxon site at Marshchapel indicated that the industry was in operation in the late tenth century. It showed, too, that the earliest salt making sites were further west than had previously been supposed. Until this discovery, the assumption had been that the Domesday sites were to the east of Sea Dyke Way where the saltern mounds, the industrial remains of the sand washing process, are clearly visible from the air in a photograph taken in 1946. The new evidence indicates that the sites recorded by the Domesday commissioners may have been as far west as the site on which the church was to be built some four hundred years later (Figure 6.5). It also makes an important contribution to the debate, raised by Grady, about when the salt washing process was first introduced; it is now

⁶⁰⁰ Palmer-Brown, "Bronze Age Salt Production in Tetney."

clear that the method did not arrive with the Anglo-Saxons immigrants, as had previously been proposed.⁶⁰¹ There is good reason to believe that it was not the method employed at the time of the Domesday survey, but the questions of when and how it was introduced still remain to be answered.

Bridbury's study, *England and the Salt Trade in the Later Middle Ages*, is unique in its contribution to an understanding of the role of the Lincolnshire salt industry in the economy of north western Europe. He describes how the salt and fishing industries were interdependent. A prodigious amount of fish of many varieties was eaten in the Middle Ages but the most common was the herring; the Baltic and the North Sea 'were alive with them'.⁶⁰² Herring deteriorates very quickly after being caught, so most of it was eaten cured. As curing needed to be effected within 24 hours, salt had to be available near the fishing grounds. In England the industry was centred mainly around the east coast towns of Scarborough and Yarmouth. The arrival of herring could be predicted and, at least in the fourteenth century, a great herring fair was held annually in Yarmouth from 29 September until 10 November. Until the mid-fourteenth century in northern Europe three centres of salt production were established corresponding with the main herring fishing grounds. Highly prized salt was produced in Luneburg in North Germany by boiling brine from local springs. On the coast of the Low Countries, salt impregnated peat was burnt, the ashes dissolved in salt water and the solution evaporated to produce fine, white salt. The English coast was the third centre of production. In the early fourteenth century, of the ports chiefly concerned with the export of salt, Boston was pre-eminent.⁶⁰³ Though Bridbury believed that Lincolnshire was the most important centre of the industry in England, he was unclear about the method used. It may also be true that he had no knowledge of the salt makers of the north-east Lindsey coast.

By the beginning of the fifteenth century, the salt industry had begun to change. The Low Countries were running out of peat and Luneburg could no longer supply the needs of the Baltic region. Cheap salt could be imported from southern Europe where the weather was warmer and solar evaporation would usually be sufficient to extract the salt

⁶⁰¹ Fenwick, "Medieval salt-production and landscape development in the Lincolnshire Marsh.", Grady, "Medieval and Post Medieval Salt Extraction in North-East Lincolnshire."pp.91-92.

⁶⁰² Bridbury, *England and the Salt Trade in the Later Middle Ages*.

⁶⁰³ Ibid.p.21.

from sea water. Proximity to the northern markets gave the Atlantic coast of France an advantage over Spain and Portugal so that Bourgneuf Bay, situated a few miles south of the Loire, became the most famous salt making centre in western Europe. ‘Bay’ salt was cheap but inferior; its importation into the Low Countries led to the development of a refining industry to produce ‘salt on salt’, a better quality product. The decline of the herring industry caused further disruption to the English salt industry.⁶⁰⁴ However, as we shall see, the salt industry of north east Lindsey may have suffered a blow but it was not fatal; the Marshchapel salt makers and their neighbours continued to produce salt for another 250 years.

6.4 Salt making in Marshchapel in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

It is a quarter of a century since the publication of Sturman’s research and, compared to some other salt making sites in Lincolnshire, the Lindsey marshland has been somewhat neglected during that time. In the light of new insights, it is time for a reassessment. Much of the surviving documentary material has remained unexploited. In this section, a detailed analysis of the documents clarifies some of the issues raised by Sturman and by Grady and dispels some earlier misconceptions concerning the organisation of the salt making industry in the region and the techniques employed. Finally, in the light of new insights, the reasons for the decline of the industry are explored.

Fortunately, the information provided by Haiwarde in the cartouche on his map leaves us in no doubt that the sand washing process was the method employed in Marshchapel in 1595.

The round groundes at the easte end of Marshchappell are called maures and are first framed by layinge together of great quantities of moulde for the making of salte. When the maures grow greate the salt makers remove more easte and come nearer to the sea and then the former maures become in some fewe years good pasture groundes. Those that have cotages upon them are at this presente in use for salt.

The remains of the ‘round groundes’ to which he refers are visible on the aerial photograph taken in 1946 (Figure 6.6). It is also clear from the 1595 map and from evidence in the landscape that the process which led to the creation of ‘great maures’ had been employed over several centuries. However, documents of the twelfth and

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.p.21.

thirteenth centuries which refer to salt are not sufficiently specific about the processes involved to resolve the question about when this method was first introduced into the region.⁶⁰⁵ What may be the earliest documentary evidence of the process is an inventory, which Rudkin and Owen claim was drawn up in Marshchapel in 1375, which mentions, amongst other items, 'two hoppes for muldefang'. They imply that the word 'muldefang' means the same as the term 'mould', the salt-laden sand scraped from the beach in preparation for the sand washing process.⁶⁰⁶ Unfortunately, the document is not referenced and this writer is yet to locate the inventory quoted. The term 'muldefang' is not used in any of the Marshchapel inventories accessed in the preparation of this study.

Figure 6.6 An aerial photograph showing the landscape to the east of Sea Dyke Way



North is at the bottom of the photograph and the sea is to the left. The village of Marshchapel can be seen top right. The outline of 'maures', the industrial remains of salt making activity, are clearly visible. (RAF CPE UK/746 frame 5012, 21 September 1946, MOD)

⁶⁰⁵ Rudkin and Owen, "The Medieval Salt Industry in the Lindsey Marshland."pp.80-81.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.p.81.

6.5 The salt makers

Rudkin and Owen's study of the charter and court roll evidence, referred to above, indicated that most of the salt makers in the Middle Ages were 'villein tenants often holding their saltern and holme in conjunction with another man.'

...the partition of the Fulstow foreshore among holders of bovates which was apparent in twelfth century charters and which suggested the early organisation of salting as a side activity of farming did not survive. Most of the later Fulstow salters hired their pans and worked a holme which belonged to the manorial lord or to one of the many monastic houses having interest in the marsh. In most cases they kept a few sheep'.⁶⁰⁷

This description is not entirely consistent with the way in which the industry was organised in the sixteenth century. We saw in Chapter Two that, as the sea had receded, the land in the third precinct of Marshchapel, that is the land to the east of Seadyke Way, had been shared according to some form of agreement between the chief landholders, that is the lords of the manor, Louth Abbey and other monastic houses which had received gifts of land over the centuries (Figure 2.4). By 1595 the two lords of the manor were Lord Willoughby and Sir Christopher Hilyard. The next largest holding, which had belonged to Louth Abbey before the Dissolution, was by that time in the hands of a Mr. Allington. Though salt making continued to be 'a side activity of farming', by then it is quite clear that the industry was in the hands of the wealthy, gentlemen and yeomen farmers who, individually, owned or leased the salt making sites and owned more than 'a few sheep'. It was they who owned the salt pans and the other equipment required in the process. They employed 'salt wellers' and, probably, other less skilled workers to do the manual labour. A third group of men who were involved in the industry were the 'salters'. On the Lindsey marshes 'salters' were not engaged in making salt but in buying and selling it. The roles and status of these three groups are discussed below.

The owners of the salterns and their tenants

Haiwarde's survey has provided a key to the identification of the owners and tenants of the active salterns in 1595. That in turn has made it possible to identify those who controlled the salt making industry earlier in the century. Haiwarde stated quite clearly that salt making continued where the 'salt cotes' were marked on the map. There were

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid.p.83.

13 of these salt ‘cotes’ or huts drawn on the map. The Marshchapel field book names the owner of the ‘maure’ on which each of the salt cotes stands and, in the case of land owned by the two lords of the manor, Sir Christopher Hilyard and Lord Willoughby, also names the tenant. The ‘maures’, mounds formed of the waste of the salt making process, are immediately to the west of the salt marsh which, Haiwarde tells us, was always drowned by the spring tides. These ‘maures’ or ‘holmes’ provided higher, drier ground on which to site the salt makers’ huts, close to the salt marsh or ‘fitties’, that is, the part of the foreshore which was drowned at spring tides and which would have provided the ‘mould’, the raw material for the salt making process.

Figure 2.5 showed how the land to the east of Sea Dyke Way in Marshchapel and referred to in the Field Book as Precinct Three, was divided from north to south into five parts. Table 6.1 shows the position in Precinct Three of each of the 13 ‘cotages’ or salt cotes which were in operation in 1595 and the names of the owners and tenants of each of the maures on which they stood. At the eastern end of the First Part, the most northerly, is Middlecoteholme where there were two salt cotes on one maure and one salt cote on another. Both these maures were owned by Lord Willoughby and tenanted by Walter Harpham. The two salt cotes in the Second Part were situated on a maure owned by Sir Christopher Hilyard and also in the tenure of Walter Harpham. In the Third Part there were five salt cotes. The first was situated on a maure owned by a Mr. Slanee. Another is on part of a maure owned by Lord Willoughby and in the tenure of a Mr. Gering. A further two were on maures owned by Sir Christopher and in the tenure of Thomas Nevell. In Part Four there were two maures owned by Sir Christopher each with a salt cote leased to Richard Nevell and a third maure with a salt cote owned by Lord Willoughby and tenanted by a Mr. Gering. Evidence in the landscape indicates earlier salt making activity in the most southerly Fifth Part, formerly Louth Abbey land, but it had ceased there by 1595.

In summary, Lord Willoughby owned the sites of five salt cotes, Sir Christopher Hilyard owned the sites of six and a Mr. Slanee owned the sites of the remaining two. Walter Harpham held the tenure of five sites, three of Lord Willoughby’s and two of Sir Christopher Hilyard’s, a Mr. Gering held the tenancy of two of those belonging to Lord Willoughby. Of the remaining four owned by Sir Christopher Hilyard, two were in the hands of Thomas Nevell and two were held by Thomas’s uncle, Richard Nevell.

Richard's brother, Thomas, died in 1594 leaving his copyhold land in North Cotes to his eldest son, John, and his leases in Marshchapel to his youngest son, Thomas, the two middle sons, William and Augustus, being 'base born'.⁶⁰⁸ As only the tenants of land held by the two lords of the manor were named in the Field Books, the tenants of the two sites owned by Mr. Slanee are not identified. It also transpires that those two sites tenanted by Mr. Gering were sublet. Fortunately, documentary evidence has made it possible to identify with some confidence the tenant of Mr. Slanee and the subtenant of Mr. Gering; like the other individuals who were actively exploiting the salt making sites in 1595, they were both local men.

Table 6.1 Owners and tenants of Active Salterns in Marshchapel in 1595.

	Salt cotes	Owner	Tenant	Subtenant
Part One				
1 maure	2	Lord Willoughby	Walter Harpham	
1 maure	1	Lord Willoughby	Walter Harpham	
Part Two				
1 maure	2	Sir Christopher Hilyard	Walter Harpham	
Part Three				
1 maure	2	Mr. Slanee	Thomas Dawson	
Pt. maure	1	Lord Willoughby	Mr. Gering	Richard Nevell
1 maure	1	Sir Christopher Hilyard	Thomas Nevell	
1 maure	1	Sir Christopher Hilyard	Thomas Nevell	
Part Four				
1 maure	1	Sir Christopher Hilyard	Richard Nevell	
1 maure	1	Sir Christopher Hilyard	Richard Nevell	
1 maure	1	Lord Willoughby	Mr. Gering	Richard Nevell

When Stephen Slanee, Citizen and Alderman of London, purchased land in Marshchapel of Patrick Sacheverell in 1584, including '2 salt cotes and 2 hundred acres of mottye ground', it was described as 'now or late in the tenancy or occupancy of Thomas Dawson'.⁶⁰⁹ Thomas Dawson of Marshchapel, yeoman, died in 1588 leaving three salt pans amongst his other goods.⁶¹⁰ He left his interest in his land in Marshchapel to his young son, Thomas, who was almost certainly still in possession of Slanee's two salt cotes in 1595.⁶¹¹ In 1587 lands in Fulstow and Fulstow Marsh held by copy roll from Lord Willoughby by Peter Gering were transferred to his sons, Richard

⁶⁰⁸ LAO LCC Wills 1594 i, 21, LAO LCC Wills, 1590, 268.

⁶⁰⁹ LAO LD 85/4/C.

⁶¹⁰ LAO Inv 75/235.

⁶¹¹ LAO LCC Wills 1588 ii, 227.

and Nicholas Gering.⁶¹² In 1590 a Mr. Gering, of Winterton, was subletting his land in Marshchapel to John Nevell.⁶¹³ At his death in 1590, John Nevell, father of the brothers Richard and Thomas named above, had left to Richard ‘all mye interest of mye farmes (leased) of Sir Christopher Hilliard and Mr. Gering in Marshchappell’.⁶¹⁴ So it becomes clear that the 13 salt cotes that were still active in 1595 were in the hands of just four local men, Thomas Dawson, Walter Harpham and Richard and Thomas Nevell.

Table 6.2 Owners of Salt Pans and Quantities of Lead in Marshchapel Inventories.

	Date	Pans/Lead	Value	Reference
Cuthbert Cowper	1538	1	12s	LAO Inv 7/89
Henry Francis	1541	30 stone	10s.	LAO Inv 10/52
John Est	1546.	1	10s.	LAO Inv 14/57
Agnes Mawer	1547	1 + gear	£1.1s.	LAO Inv 15/278
Edmund Cowper	1547	1	10s.	LAO Inv 16/6
Walter Storr	1547	33 stone	14s.	LAO Inv 16/7
Christopher Dawson	1548	2	£1	LAO Inv 16/15
Robert Dawson	1549	3	£2	LAO Inv 18/206
Charles Skelton	1549	1	10s.	LAO Inv 182/28
Michael Est	1555/6	60 stone	£2.10s.	LAO Inv 28/119
Charles Dawson	1556	3	£3	LAO Inv 28/261
Walter Cowper	1558	2	£2.6s.8d.	LAO Inv 33/359
Edmund Cowper	1559	2	£2.10s.	LAO Inv 34/347
John Leson	1566	51 stone	£2.13s.	LAO Inv 46/105
John Maddison	1569	2	£3	LAO Inv 49/275
John Dawson	1569/71	2 + gear	£7	LAO Inv 50/288
Thomas Dawson	1588	3 + gear	£4.10s.	LAO Inv 75/235
Thomas Maddison	1588	3 + turf, mould etc.	£40	LAO 1581-9/884
John Nevell	1590	2	£3	LAO Inv 78/200
Thomas Nevell	1594	2	£3	LAO Inv 85/65
Walter Harpham	1607	4 + gear	£10	LAO Inv 102/252

Identifying those individuals who held the salterns in 1595 has provided a key to naming others who controlled the industry earlier in the century, for they were invariably associated with the ownership of, at least, one salt pan or a quantity of lead sufficient to make a salt pan. Table 6.2 demonstrates that for the 70 years between 1538 and the last salt maker’s inventory there were 21 inventories in which at least one salt pan or a significant quantity of lead occurred. These 21 represent only ten families, including the three named above who were present at the time of the survey, the Dawsons, Harphams and Nevells. These are the same families who have featured in

⁶¹² LAO H7/1.

⁶¹³ LAO Misc Doc 1000/15/35.

⁶¹⁴ LAO LCC Wills, 1590, 268.

previous chapters, who held most of the land in 1595, who witnessed wills, appraised goods and held office. A close look at the documents relating to the Cowper family, who were not represented in the 1595 survey, confirms that, at least from the early sixteenth century, the salt making industry was in the hands of wealthy families. What is also noteworthy is that there was a tendency, in the later years, for each owner to have more pans than those in the earlier years. It appears that the salterns had become concentrated in fewer hands. The numbers are small but it may be a further example of the polarisation which has been observed in previous chapters.

In the first half of the sixteenth century, the four Cowper brother had the makings of a dynasty in Marshchapel but by 1560 the family had disappeared from the scene. Robert was the first of the brothers to die. It was clear from his will, drawn up in 1535, that he was a fairly substantial farmer. His eldest son, Walter, was the main beneficiary. He was to receive the livestock and a plough with 'geres for six bests' a 'moulde bewell' and a salt pan, the first to appear in an extant will. Robert left the farm and another house to his wife for her life time, after which it was to go to Walter. The other sons and daughters, Margaret, Robert, William, Janet and Agnes, were given sums of money. When Walter died in 1558, leaving a young family of three daughters and a son, he had two salt pans one of which he bequeathed to his son, also Walter, and the other to his wife, Christian. The young Walter was also to have the 'homes gere' but not the 'moulde' or the 'turves' and a house. The lease of the farm was given to the widow to bring up the daughters, Emmet, Alison and Marie and, possibly, another child in the womb. No further documents have been found which could indicate what became of the descendants of Robert Cowper or of the two salt pans.

John was the next of the four brothers to die. In his will, drawn up in 1537, he left to his wife, the farm that he had occupied during his life. To his son, Cuthbert, he left the farm that he 'had of Sir Hilyard in the west end of the town' and six beast gates in the 'Easten Holme'. The residue of John's goods was to be divided into three parts, two thirds were to go to his wife and her children by a previous marriage, in payment of the legacy their father had left them, and one third was to be divided evenly between his own children who were neither named or numbered.⁶¹⁵ This family, too, disappears from the

⁶¹⁵ LAO LCC Wills 1535-7, 224.

documents. There is no reference in his will to a salt pan but his brother Edmund's son is later to be found making salt at the East Holme.

The inventory of the third brother Cuthbert, who died in 1538 is one of the earliest extant probate inventories for Marshchapel and the first to indicate ownership of a salt pan. Although his status is not explicitly stated in his inventory, other details indicate that he was one of the more substantial members of the parish. The total value of Cuthbert's goods was assessed at £40.10s.7d. He owned 25 head of cattle, nine horses and more than 60 sheep. Amongst his debts were £3.13s.8d. owing to Sir Hilyard for rent and 10s. owing to the king, presumably for rent of land which Henry had acquired at the Dissolution.⁶¹⁶ He had three children, Robert the eldest, William, John and Margaret. Cuthbert left to his wife, Agnes, the 'freehold with appurtenances for the term of her life' and 'the indenture which I have of Sir Hilyard for my terme of yeres', which were to go to his sons after her death if she were to remarry.⁶¹⁷ She did remarry, becoming Agnes Mawer and it was she who died in 1547 leaving goods to the value of £27.9s.7d. She left a debt of £2.6s.8d to the heirs of Hilyard, presumably for rent. She bequeathed the farm and the salt pan with other equipment at the holmes to her son, John Cowper, which suggests that the two older brothers, Robert and William, had already died. To her grandson, Cuthbert son of Robert, she bequeathed a lamb.⁶¹⁸ To date, no documents have been found which can explain what happened to this branch of the family or to the salt pan.

The fourth brother, Edmund Cowper, died in January 1547 a few months before his sister-in-law, Agnes Mawer. He, too, must have been one of the wealthiest men in the parish at time of his death; he owned 26 head of cattle, four oxen, 16 horses and 88 sheep. He owned a salt pan valued at 10s. and other equipment associated with salt making. The bulk of his property, which he bequeathed to his son, Edmund, included 'all my freehold lands, pastures, midowys, sidings, grounds with the appurtenances thereto belonging' and 'all my indentures and copys that I have for the sume of my yeres'. His daughter, Alison, was given £4, two cows and ten sheep which Edmund had to keep until she was 15 years old.⁶¹⁹ By 1547, young Edmund had two daughters,

⁶¹⁶ LAO Inv 7/89.

⁶¹⁷ LAO LCC Wills 1538-40, 62.

⁶¹⁸ LAO Inv 15/278, LAO LCC Wills 1547, 237.

⁶¹⁹ LAO Inv 16/6, LAO LCC Wills 1547-9, 83.

Margaret and Janet, though he may have had other children before his inventory was drawn up in July 1559. He seems to have built on his inheritance in the 12 years after his father's death. Edmund's neighbours valued his goods, which included 35 cattle, eight oxen, 23 horses and 144 sheep, at £287.1s.2d., a considerable sum in 1559. He was involved in salt making on two sites, 'the west cote holme' and the 'east cote holme'. His inventory was drawn up at the height of the salt making season so he had extensive equipment, including a salt pan, at each site.⁶²⁰ The exceptional detail which this inventory provides about the equipment used in salt making is considered more fully below. Unfortunately, no will has been found or any other document which might explain what happened to this branch of the Cowper family or to the salt making sites and equipment.

After 1559, the Cowpers seem to fade from the salt scene in Marshchapel. In 1559, they appeared to have control of a considerable amount of land in Marshchapel including, at least, four salt making sites but there were no Cowpers listed in the Marshchapel field book in 1595. There is no evidence that the loss of their holdings was associated with inheritance customs. Where their wills are available, it appears that it was customary for the eldest son to inherit the bulk of the property. A high rate of mortality may have contributed to the failure of the male line. Without later probate documents, nothing more can be learnt until the parish register becomes available in 1590. There were only 12 entries relating to the family in Marshchapel parish register after 1590, ten of them relating to the family of another Cuthbert Cowper, for whom no probate documents have been found. However, there were Cowpers associated with the salt industry in neighbouring Grainthorpe until 1609 when William Cowper, yeoman, died leaving salt making equipment, including a lead pan weighing only '15 stone or thereabouts' and valued at 15s.⁶²¹

The salt wellers

The Cowpers, the Dawsons, the Nevells and Walter Harpham were the owners of the salt making equipment but they would not have been the men who used it. Much of the work involved in the various stages of making salt by the process employed in Marshchapel in the sixteenth century would appear to require no special skill. The

⁶²⁰ LAO Inv 34/347.

⁶²¹ LAO Inv 105/139, LAO LCC Admons 1609/290.

harrowing of the intertidal beach before the fortnightly spring tides and the collecting of the salt-impregnated sand, after it had been allowed to dry out at neap tides, could probably have been done by any able bodied man or woman. The filtration process might require a little more experience, in particular to ensure that the brine remained sufficiently strong, but it should not have taken long for a farm labourer or household servant to learn. The heating of the brine to extract the salt was a skilled task and it may have required the specialist services of a 'weller'. The temperature had to be carefully regulated to avoid crystallisation of those salts more soluble than sodium chloride or the finished product would become bitter to the taste. Scum had to be removed during the boiling process and a range of different substances, such as blood, egg white or ale, were sometimes added in the belief that they would aid the process. The sodium chloride crystals had to be removed from the liquid just at the right point so that the unwanted salts remained in the bitter brine.⁶²² However, in spite of their apparent importance, there is documentary evidence for very few salt wellers on the Lindsey marshland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

There is a record of a salt weller employed in Marshchapel in the fourteenth century; in 1396, Henry of Ulfshow, (Fulstow) was presented at the Assizes for obtaining 2s. per week for his labour instead of the 15d. which was customary before the 'pestilence'.⁶²³ In August 1567, John Brather of North Cotes died owing £4.13s.4d. 'to the wellowres for ther wages'.⁶²⁴ It has been possible to identify only two salt wellers from the documents available for Marshchapel and the neighbouring parishes for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This may not be a true reflection of the number of wellers living and working in the area; occupation was rarely recorded in the parish register or in probate inventories before 1600, and there is nothing amongst the goods listed in the two that have been found that would have provided a clue to the occupation of the deceased. It may also be the case that there were salt wellers who died without sufficient means to warrant probate inventories or wills. However, if Robert Hobson and Robert Kermon were typical, it would appear that, like other crafts men, such as the webster, the miller, the blacksmith and the butcher, the salt wellers combined their trade with the output of their small holdings to make a modest but adequate living.

⁶²² Bridbury, *England and the Salt Trade in the Later Middle Ages*.pp.5-10., Brownrigg, *The Art of Making Common Salt*.pp.56-60.

⁶²³ Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow."p.53

⁶²⁴ LAO Inv 46/415.

Robert Hobson of Marshchapel described himself in his will as a ‘salt weller’ as did his appraisers when they drew up the inventory of his goods in May 1578. Amongst his possessions, which were valued at £20.1s.4d, were eight cattle, one horse and 22 sheep. He left debts amounting to £2.2s.6d of which 18s.2d was owed to his two sons and 19s.4d. was for cloth that he had bought in Louth and which he left to his daughter, Elizabeth. He also owed 5s for a ‘beast gate’ but the money owed to him was more than enough to cover his debts. William Johnson owed him 4s ‘for work’ and Thomas Maddison owed him 15s, of which at least 5s was for a ‘load of turves’. Both Maddison and Johnson were involved in the salt making industry. Thomas Maddison of Marshchapel owned three salt pans at his death in 1588 and the Johnsons had been connected with the industry in the neighbouring hamlet of Wragholme at least since 1538.⁶²⁵ When Robert Woods died in 1581 his 29 stone salt pan was in the hands of William Johnson.⁶²⁶ Walter Marflet, who was a salter, and John Marflet, probably also a salter, owed Robert Hobson £1.6s.8d and £1 respectively. Walter’s debt was to be paid on the 24th of August, the feast of St. Bartholomew, and John’s was due on Midsummer’s Day. One Christopher Banes of Binbrook owed him £1. To his son, John, Robert left the house which he had occupied until his death and which he held by ‘copie of court rowle of the Duchess of Suffolk according to the custom of the manor’. Thomas, already the father of two, appears to have been the elder of the two sons so, perhaps, he had already received his share of the inheritance.⁶²⁷

The possessions of Robert Kermon, another Marshchapel salt weller, were valued at £19.18s.8d at his death in 1587. They included seven cattle, a colt, ten sheep and a woollen wheel. He appears to have died childless for his wife was to inherit most of his possessions. On the surface, he would seem to have been less prosperous than Robert Hobson but it is not possible to know what might have been included in ‘the residue’ of his goods which he left to his wife.⁶²⁸ There is nothing amongst the possessions of Robert Hobson or Robert Kermon which could be associated with their craft but it is tempting to interpret as welling shovels the ‘two wellyge shoules’ listed in July 1569

⁶²⁵ LAO LCC Admons 1581-9, 884.

⁶²⁶ LAO Inv 7/52, LAO Inv 67/85, LAO LCC Admons 1581-9, 884.

⁶²⁷ LAO Inv 62/388, LAO LCC Wills 1578, 171.

⁶²⁸ LAO LCC Wills 1587, 337.

amongst the goods of Thomas Proveste.⁶²⁹ William Proveste, who died in November of the same year, was involved in the industry as a ‘salter’.⁶³⁰

The salters

It is not unusual for historians to describe as a ‘salter’ anyone whom they believe to have been involved in the salt industry but, in Marshchapel and the neighbouring villages in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the title appears to have been used in a more specific way. It has been possible to identify 12 salters amongst the Marshchapel documents and, in almost every case where there is an inventory available, the salters are associated with the possession of a ‘salt cart’. There are other indications in the documents which, taken together, suggest that the particular involvement of the salter in the industry was as a trader rather than salt maker. In 1582, as well as his salt cart and ‘all the geres’, Robert Gibbon of Grainthorpe had ‘salt secks and pooks’ worth 2s. and in 1591 Barnard Hobson had ‘sacks, pooks and pannells’ valued at 10s.⁶³¹ The ‘pooks’ were bags or sacks. The meaning of the word ‘pannels’ in this context is not certain but may be a kind of saddle or cloth pads to protect a horse’s back from being chafed.⁶³²

Salt carts do not appear in inventories amongst the equipment at the salt cotes and were, apparently, never associated with the process of salt production. What distinguished a salt cart from a ‘horse cart’ can only be surmised. The fact that it carried salt may have made the salt cart unsuitable for other purposes or, perhaps more likely, it was specially designed either to withstand the effects of prolonged exposure to the salt or to protect the salt from the weather or, indeed, both. In Grainthorpe in 1553, Thomas Getton’s salt cart was valued at 6s.8d, in 1569 William Storre’s ‘salt cart with geres’ was worth 10s and, amongst William Provest’s possessions at his death shortly after, was ‘the salt cart with a teld and iiij pare trase with measeures’ valued at 13s.4d.⁶³³ The value continued to increase steadily: a decade later the salt cart of Vincent Browne of Grainthorpe with the ‘teld and geares’ valued at £1 while his horse cart was worth only 8s.4d and by 1592 Christopher Dawson’s ‘salt cart furnished’ was valued at £1.6s.8d.⁶³⁴ A ‘teld’ was a tent

⁶²⁹ LAO Inv 49/176.

⁶³⁰ LAO Inv 49/267.

⁶³¹ LAO Inv 70/255, LAO Inv 81/472.

⁶³² Joy Bristow, *The Local Historians Glossary and Vade Mecum*, Second ed., *Local History Record Series* (Nottingham: Continuing Education Press University of Nottingham, 1994).p.143.

⁶³³ LAO Inv 26/62, LAO Inv 49/267, LAO Inv 49/284.

⁶³⁴ LAO Inv 63/134, LAO LCC Admons 1592/242.

cover, a canopy or awning.⁶³⁵ Presumably, for the salter it was a device for protecting the salt from the weather. The 'trace' were the ropes or leather straps by which a horse was attached to the swingle tree of the cart.⁶³⁶

The number of salters it has been possible to identify in Marshchapel and the neighbouring villages greatly outnumber the salt wellers. This may indicate that there were more of them or that they were generally more affluent and, therefore, more likely to leave probate documents behind them. Perhaps the most likely explanation is that they were easier to identify, especially before 1600 when it was rare for status to be given in probate documents. Whereas, there was usually nothing in the inventories of salt wellers which was specifically associated with their trade, the salter's salt cart often provided the key to identifying his occupation. It was an occupation that seemed to run in families, like the Hobsons and the Ramsleys. It was not unusual for salters to be poorer relatives of those who controlled the industry, for example, there were three Dawsons amongst the 12 salters identified in Marshchapel. We saw in Chapter Five that the economic status of salters was on a par with that of salt wellers and other craftsmen. The average value of the possessions of the six salters for whom inventories are available is £22 compared to £23 for the two salt wellers, £19 for other trades and craftsmen and £12 for the labourers. Like the salt wellers, they were able to combine the income from their smallholdings with that of their trade.

William Provest, whose inventory was drawn up in November 1569, was one of the wealthier of the Marshchapel salters. Amongst his goods, which were valued at £33.6s, were 16 cattle, eight horses, 20 sheep and eight pigs.⁶³⁷ He owed £8.5s to Mr. Jolliffe's clerk for nine year's rent but amongst other money owed to him was £2.6s.8d that William Storre was to repay him 'at such time as Mr. Jolliffe clark shall call for his rentes or his deputie'. Perhaps this was the salter's way of keeping his rent money safe until it was needed. He was also credited with 13s, the amount he had already paid for two year's rent of the 'vicar's close'. He owned the 'grase of one close called Donom Close with the hay that is in it', one load of hay valued at £2.13s.4d and hay in store valued at £4.6s.8d.⁶³⁸ The horses were essential to William's business and the hay was

⁶³⁵ OED

⁶³⁶ OED

⁶³⁷ LAO Inv 49/267.

⁶³⁸ Ibid.

necessary to feed them. A load was 38 truss. In 1693 a statute laid down that a truss of dry hay should weigh 56lbs and wet hay, hay sold between June and August, should weigh 60lbs.⁶³⁹ Thomas Wilson who died in September 1596 was less affluent than William Provest. He was identified as a salter in the parish register; he may already have ceased trading for, although he had a mare valued at £1 and hay in store assessed at the same price, there was no salt cart listed in his inventory. His goods were valued at £12, a sum which was the average for a labourer. Most of his wealth was in his three cows and six sheep, which together were assessed at £7.3s.4d. The lease of his house was worth 5s.⁶⁴⁰

The three Ramsley brothers deserve a mention as they were amongst the last of the salters and what can be learnt of them, mainly from reconstitution of the parish register, provides some insight into their life experience as the salt industry came to an end. Arthur was buried in 1628 on the same day as his second wife, Agnes. He appears to have had nine children by his first wife, at least five of whom died in infancy. Within five months of the death of his first wife in 1602, he had remarried. He went on to have another six children, two of whom died as infants. Arthur's brother, George, had already out lived two wives when he married the third in 1629. The marriage did not last long for he died two years later. He had one child by the first marriage and three by the second but only Jane, the eldest, survived beyond childhood. Although he predeceased both brothers, Walter was the only one to be identified in the parish register as a salter at his death and, therefore, has the distinction of being the last of the Marshchapel salters to be recorded there. Walter had married Janet Dawson in 1589 and together they had nine children, at least four of whom died as infants. It may have been the same Walter who remarried in 1619 after the death of his first wife and who went on to have two more children. The youngest three of the surviving children of his first marriage were remembered in the will of their uncle, husbandman James Dawson, for he left each of them 12d. at his death in 1609.⁶⁴¹

Walter and his two brothers were still plying their trade in 1608 when they, amongst other salters, were in debt to George Clarke of North Cotes. George and Walter Ramsley each owed £1.5s.6d. for 17 strike of salt and Arthur owed £1.15s.6d. for 25

⁶³⁹ Bristow, *The Local Historians Glossary and Vade Mecum*.p.257.

⁶⁴⁰ LAO Inv 88/95.

⁶⁴¹ LAO LCC Wills 1609 i, 122.

strikes of salt and two strikes of barley.⁶⁴² Ten years later, all three brothers must have been impoverished for their names were included in a list of the poor who were each to receive 4s. according to the will of John Hobson, yeoman.⁶⁴³ By this time there was no longer any salt in which to trade. Amongst Walter's possessions at his death in 1629 were two cows valued at £4, one mare and an old horse considered to be worth £2.6s.8d and a linen wheel and a woollen wheel together worth 3s. The total value of all his goods was £8.10s.8d but his debts amounted to £8.12s 2d.⁶⁴⁴ He must have left his wife and two young daughters in poverty. It is not possible to know whether this impoverishment was a result of the decline of the salt industry or whether it was a normal feature of sickness and old age at that level of society. The fact that all three brothers were in need by 1618 and yet still well enough to remarry and have children suggests that the loss of their livelihood as salters had been a significant factor in their impoverishment. Walter's eldest son, Isaac, who was born in 1590, would never have the opportunity to follow in the family tradition. He became a tailor, a craft for which there was an increasing demand at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

6.6 Equipment and Resources

The salt cotes

Whether the salt cotes which were associated with the salt making sites belonged to the owners of the land on which they stood or to the tenants has not been established with certainty. Salt cotes are rarely mentioned in probate inventories amongst the possessions of the deceased. They may have been treated as real estate, which was not usually listed in inventories. In wills, buildings often seem to have been included in such phrases as 'all my lands whatsoever' as in Walter Harpham's will.⁶⁴⁵ The few documents in which salt cotes are mentioned seem to indicate that it was the salt makers, whether owners or tenants of the 'maures' on which they stood, who would have borne the expense of building and maintaining them. The inventory of Walter Storre, who died in the late 1540s, includes a debt of £2 for 'the repare of my ferme and for the beldyng of a salt cott' and Thomas Hallington of North Cotes, who died at about the same time, left a salt 'cott' and a salt pan with other equipment valued at £4.⁶⁴⁶ The lease of a 'salt coatt' in

⁶⁴² LAO LCC Admons 1609, 295.

⁶⁴³ LAO LCC Wills 1618 i, 127.

⁶⁴⁴ LAO LCC Admons 1629, 130.

⁶⁴⁵ LAO LCC Wills 1607 ii, 306.

⁶⁴⁶ LAO Inv 16/7, LAO Inv 16/172.

the inventory of William Teasdale of Tetney was valued at £3.6s.8d. in 1575, but there is no indication of the length of the lease or from whom it was held.⁶⁴⁷

Figure 6.7 Conjectural reconstruction of a medieval salt making site at Marshchapel.



Salt cotes at Marshchapel were probably made of mud and timber with a thatch of reeds and may have looked like this reconstruction.⁶⁴⁸ The evidence is more slender for some of the details of the salt making site depicted here.

Such huts may have been built of mud and timber with a thatch of reed secured with ropes made of rush, like those in Gedney in the Lincolnshire fenland during the Middle Ages and a similar structure for which evidence was found at Bicker Haven.⁶⁴⁹ According to Haiwarde's map the 'maures' 'that have cotages upon them are at this presente in use for salte'. At Bicker Haven what appeared to have been the remains of a hut was found close to a hearth, well down in a mound.⁶⁵⁰ Evidence from probate inventories indicates that the huts were used for storing tools and implements required for the salt making process. The salt cotes at Marshchapel were probably intended to be

⁶⁴⁷ LAO Inv 58/45.

⁶⁴⁸ Robinson, *The Book of the Lincolnshire Seaside*.p.43.

⁶⁴⁹ H.E. Hallam, "Salt Making in the Lincolnshire Fenland during the Middle Ages," *Lincolnshire Architectural and Archaeological Society Reports and Papers* 8 new series. (1960).

⁶⁵⁰ Healey, "A Medieval Salt-making Site at Bicker Haven."

more than temporary buildings; some still remained there in 1613 when the ‘salt cote holmes’ on which they stood had become pasture.⁶⁵¹

Filtration units and hearths

Grady could find no trace of filtration units or hearths in aerial photographs of the salterns mounds in north east Lindsey.⁶⁵² In the absence of archaeological evidence from Marshchapel, little can be known about them, though they may have been similar to those found at Bicker Haven and Wainfleet.⁶⁵³ Archaeological evidence from those two excavations suggests that the hearths and the filtration units may have been on different parts of the salt making site. Yet this would appear to defy logic as it would have entailed more transportation. It has been suggested that the filtration units at Marshchapel could have been in the centre of the saltern mound.⁶⁵⁴ Perhaps this theory is based on what has been described as the ‘floriform’ shape of the saltern mounds with their darker and, apparently wetter, centre which can be seen in aerial photographs.⁶⁵⁵ It is suggested that the waste material would have been deposited around the working site. If this were the case, it would appear to have presented a logistical problem for the workers; as they went to and fro about their business, they would have been forced to negotiate their way around increasing quantities of ‘mould’ from which the salt had been extracted.

The suggestion that the evaporation process would have been carried out within the salt cote must still be open to question, Perhaps this belief derives from eye witness accounts of larger and more permanent salt making sites elsewhere, such as Georgius Agricola’s account of salt making at Halle in Germany in the sixteenth century or on evidence from sites of a later date, such as that at Avranchin in Normandy in the mid-eighteenth century.⁶⁵⁶ At Bicker Haven hearths were found near what appears to be the remains of a hut, rather than inside it.⁶⁵⁷ The hearths would have needed some

⁶⁵¹ TNA E178 4063.

⁶⁵² Grady, "Medieval and Post Medieval Salt Extraction in North-East Lincolnshire."

⁶⁵³ Healey, "A Medieval Salt-making Site at Bicker Haven.", McAvoy, "Marine Salt Extraction: The Excavation of Salterns at Wainfleet St Mary's, Lincolnshire."

⁶⁵⁴ Fenwick, "Medieval salt-production and landscape development in the Lincolnshire Marsh.", Healey, "A Medieval Salt-making Site at Bicker Haven."

⁶⁵⁵ Grady, "Medieval and Post Medieval Salt Extraction in North-East Lincolnshire."p.84.

⁶⁵⁶ Agricola, *De Re Metallica*, Sturman, "Salt Making in the Lindsey Marshland in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries."

⁶⁵⁷ A. Bell, D. Gurney, and H. Healey, "Lincolnshire Salterns: Excavations at Helpringham, Holbeach St. Johns and Bicker Haven," *East Anglian Archaeology*, no. 89 (1999).pp.86-90.

protection from the prevailing winds. Stake holes were found at a site in the Adur valley in Sussex, which may have held a feature to support a wind break.⁶⁵⁸

The hearths may have been similar in size to those found at Bicker Haven, which measured 1.37m in length, 38.1cm in width and 47cm in depth, though these are narrower than might have been expected and, it seems, usually appeared in pairs. At Bicker Haven, the remains of hearths were found at various levels within the mounds. Hudson suggests that when the spoil heap had reached a suitable height above sea level it could be used as a boiling place, relatively dry and close to the place of work.⁶⁵⁹ However, as was indicated above, the mounds at Wainfleet and Bicker Haven are a different shape and not so extensive as those at Marshchapel; it may be misleading to attempt to draw parallels. A detailed archaeological survey of the saltern mounds on the north-east Lindsey coast may eventually provide some answers.

The salt pans

The fact that there appears to have been only one smallish lead pan per site in Marshchapel in the sixteenth century leads one to suppose that a simple hearth structure would be adequate for heating the brine. As we shall see below, the evidence from Walter Cowper's inventory indicates that he had two sites and one salt pan associated with each.⁶⁶⁰ It is also clear, where probate inventories are available for those who held salt making sites in 1595, that they had no more than one pan at each site. The lead 'pan' in which the brine was heated to extract the salt was an essential piece of equipment for the Marshchapel salt maker in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Ownership of salt pans was invariably associated with the ownership or tenancy of the salt making site. Thomas Dawson had three salt pans at his death in 1588, John Nevell left four in 1590, Thomas Nevell had two in 1594 and Walter Harpham owned four when he died in 1607.⁶⁶¹ Each of these men held more than one site in 1595. All the available evidence indicates that there was one pan per salt cote; apparently the north east Lindsey salt makers in the sixteenth century were not managing multiple pans on their hearths as conjectured elsewhere.⁶⁶² The choice of lead for these pans has been

⁶⁵⁸ E.W. Holden and T.P. Hudson, "Salt-making in the Adur Valley Sussex," *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 119 (1981).pp.129-130.

⁶⁵⁹ *Ibid.*p.p.125.

⁶⁶⁰ LAO Inv 34/437.

⁶⁶¹ LAO Inv 75/35, LAO Inv 78/200, LAO Inv 85/65, LAO Inv 102/252.

⁶⁶² Sturman, "Salt Making in the Lindsey Marshland in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries."

queried on the grounds, firstly, that no lead has been turned up on the salt making sites. This argument can easily be countered as lead was valuable and could be reused to make a new pan or for other purposes. Another consideration was that lead would melt at high temperature. The use of peat rather than coal would help to avoid this problem and one of the skills of the salt weller was to control the temperature. The danger of lead poisoning was almost certainly unknown. The remains of several lead pans dating from the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods have been found in Cheshire in recent years and lead pans were still used at Annandale as late as the nineteenth century.⁶⁶³ Reconstruction of the salt making process using lead pans indicates some good reasons for the choice.

The Lion Salt Works used the remains of a lead pan found at Shavington in Cheshire, in their reconstruction of a salt making site. The Shavington pan was initially believed to have been associated with the Roman period but may have been of later date. Andrew Fielding and his team also built a hearth, a shallow trench lined with bricks, which was based on archaeological evidence found on sites in Droitwich and Middlewich dating from Roman to Anglo-Saxon periods. They reconstructed the evaporation process and, in so doing, helped to answer some of the questions.⁶⁶⁴ Lead, unlike other metals, does not colour the salt, and white salt was highly prized. The lead would melt only if the pan were boiled dry, an outcome which would certainly be avoided by the salt maker as it would have had an adverse effect on the finished product. Lead was relatively easy to shape and no great skill or advanced technology was required to create a simple, tray-shaped pan. The findings have also helped to dispel possible misconceptions about the likely dimensions of the salt pans in use in Marshchapel in the sixteenth century and, in so doing, have provided what is, probably, a more realistic view of the scale of the industry on the Lindsey marshland.

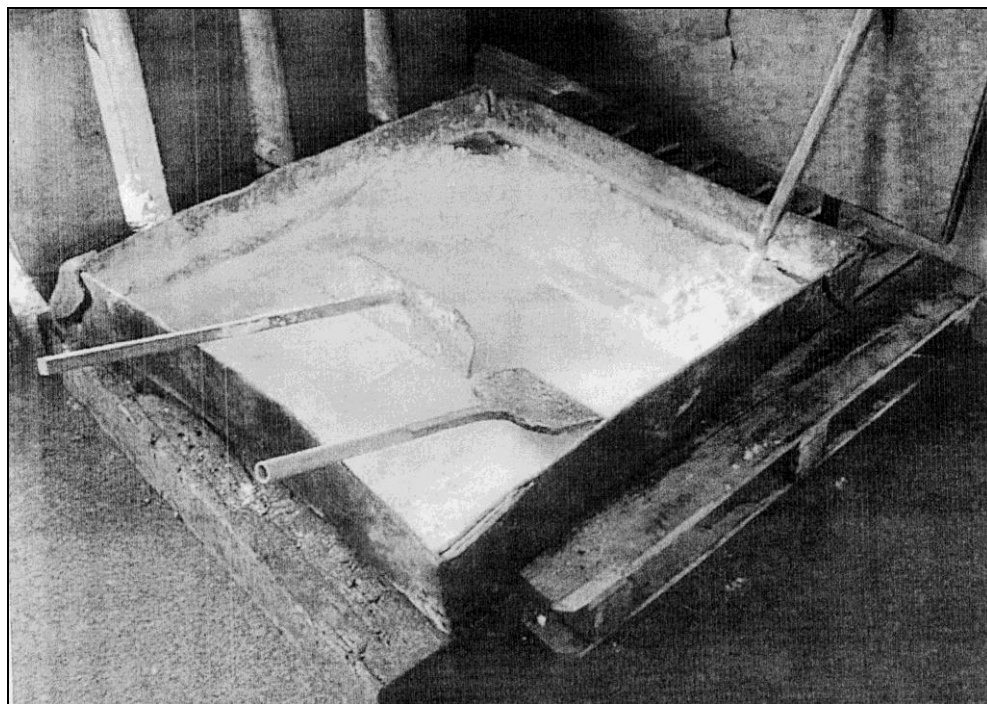
The salt pan found at Shavington in 1993 had been flattened and cut into eight, roughly equal sized, portions, presumably for recycling. Only seven of the eight parts were found but it was enough to give a clear indication of the size and shape of the original. It

⁶⁶³ Christopher A. Whatley, *The Scottish salt industry, 1570-1850 : an economic and social history* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987).p.13.

⁶⁶⁴ A.P. Fielding, "The Lion Salt Works Project.," *Lion Salt Works Trust Monograph Series*. 2 (2005), Dan Garner, "Salt Making in Roman Middlewich: Part 1 Discoveries before 2000," *Archaeology North West* 7, no. 17 (2005).p.24.

has been estimated that the rectangular pan, formed of lead 0.8cm thick, would have measured approximately 1m by 90cm by 14cm and would have weighed about 118 kilograms, which is approximately equivalent to 260lbs or 18½ stone.⁶⁶⁵ The salt pan produced at the Lion Works was about 25% larger. It was made from a sheet of lead 0.8cm thick, measuring 1.2m by 1.2m, and weighing 150 kilograms, roughly the equivalent in imperial measure of 330lbs. or 23½ stone (Figure 6.8). The weight of salt pans is rarely included in inventories but we do know that the salt pan belonging to Robert Wood, yeoman, of Grainthorpe was heavier than both the Shavington pan and the Lion Works pan. At his death in 1581 his salt pan weighed 29 stone and was considered to be worth £1.9s.⁶⁶⁶ On the other hand, William Cowper, yeoman, also of Grainthorpe, in 1609 left a salt pan which was lighter than the Roman pan, weighing only ‘15 stone or thereabout’ and valued at 15s.⁶⁶⁷

Figure 6.8 Reconstruction of a salt pan found at Shavington in Cheshire⁶⁶⁸



The evidence from Marshchapel inventories which is set out in Table 6.2 suggests that the most common weight of the pans on the Lincolnshire marshes in the sixteenth and

⁶⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁶ LAO Inv 67/85.

⁶⁶⁷ LAO LCC Admons 1609, 290.

⁶⁶⁸ Fielding, "The Lion Salt Works Project.."p.64.

early seventeenth centuries was between about 25 and 30 stone, though there could be considerable variation. It is also possible to trace the fluctuation in the price of lead and, consequently, to estimate the weight of some of the salt pans where this is not already stated in the inventory. For example, in the 1540s Henry Francis owned 30 stone of lead valued at 10s, the equivalent of three stone for 1s.⁶⁶⁹ Also in the 1540s, John Est and Edward Cowper each had a salt pan also appraised at 10s, a value which would indicate a weight of about 30 stone, a little heavier than that of the Lion Works's pan.⁶⁷⁰ The price of lead had more than doubled by 1555/6 when Michael Est's three score stone of lead, was valued at 50s.⁶⁷¹ That would have been sufficient to make two pans each weighing 30 stone for 25s. each. In 1556, Charles Dawson's three salt pans were together valued at £3 which suggests that they weighed an average of 24 stone each. Two years later, Walter Cowper's two salt pans were considered to be worth £2.6s.8d and the following year, in 1559, the two owned by Edmund Cowper were each worth 25s indicating a weight of about 30 stone.⁶⁷² The price of lead had more than trebled since 1540 when, in 1566, John Leson's 51 stone was valued at £2.13s, just over 1s per stone.⁶⁷³ That would indicate that in 1569 John Maddison's two salt pans which were valued together at £3 weighed a little less than 30 stone each.⁶⁷⁴ The price then appeared to have remained constant into the 1590s so that in 1594 Thomas Grant's 63 stone of lead was valued at £3.3s, or exactly 1s per stone like William Cowper's 15 stone pan in 1609.⁶⁷⁵ The drop in value by 1624, when the 24 stone of lead owned by William Bennet of North Cotes was valued at £1, may have been a consequence of the demise of the local salt industry.⁶⁷⁶

So it seems that many of the salt pans used by the salt makers of north-east Lindsey were a little larger than those made at the Lion Salt Works. Some were approximately 30% heavier than the Shavington pan but others were lighter and it is possible that the Roman and Anglo-Saxon pans, also, varied in weight. Whatever the case, the evidence seems to indicate that the scale of the salt making industry on the Lindsey coast in the sixteenth century was more similar to that of Roman and early Anglo-Saxon Britain

⁶⁶⁹ LAO Inv 19/52.

⁶⁷⁰ LAO Inv 14/57, LAO Inv 16/6.

⁶⁷¹ LAO Inv 28/119.

⁶⁷² LAO Inv 34/347.

⁶⁷³ LAO Inv.46/105.

⁶⁷⁴ LAO Inv 49/275.

⁶⁷⁵ LAO Inv 85/126.

⁶⁷⁶ LAO Inv 129/196.

than to that of Halle in the sixteenth century or of Avranchin on the Normandy coast in the mid-eighteenth century, as illustrated above (Figure 6.3). Rectangular lead salt pans of similar size to those proposed at Marshchapel, ie 4ft long, 3ft broad and 4ins deep, were still being used in Annandale as late as the nineteenth century.⁶⁷⁷

Other salt making equipment

The owners of the salt pans were invariably also the owners of the other equipment required to carry out the salt making process. This equipment, with the lead pan and the 'mould' and the 'turves', seems to have been stored at the salt making site throughout the year. The amount of detail about equipment that appraisers chose to include in inventories varied. One of the most detailed is that of Edmund Cowper which was drawn up in August 1559. It is quoted below as it exemplifies more fully the range of items that were required. Edmund was working two sites and was apparently able to share some of his equipment between the two, though there was one salt pan at each site.⁶⁷⁸ Though many of the terms used in this inventory have already been explained by Chris Sturman, they merit further exploration here.⁶⁷⁹

It is worth emphasising that, although Edmund Cowper had two sites, he had one pan at each site. It is, perhaps, remarkable that the 'turves', the 'mould' and the salt pans at each of the two sites should have been valued at exactly the same figure, but it does suggest that the two salterns were equally productive. It is interesting to note, also, that there are sheep only at the East Cote Holme. This could mean that the West Cote Holme was not suitable for sheep or that, perhaps more likely, they would have been moved from one site to the other. Perhaps the sheep were moved away from the site where the mould was being collected. It may be significant that, at the time of the death of Edmund Cowper in August 1559, those items of equipment associated with collecting the 'mould' were all at the West Cote Holme. Further, it suggests that Edmund Cowper had time between spring tides to allow the beach to dry out and to collect the mould first from one site and then from the other.

⁶⁷⁷ C.A.Whatley, *The Scottish Salt Industry 1570 to 1850: an economic and social history* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987).p.13.

⁶⁷⁸ LAO Inv 34/437.

⁶⁷⁹ Sturman, "Salt Making in the Lindsey Marshland in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries."p.53.

Fig 6.9 Extract from the inventory of Edmund Cowper August 1559⁶⁸⁰

	£	s.	d.
At the East Cote Holme			
Item 2 heapes of turves and the mould there	14		
Item one salte pane of lead ther	1	5	
Item 2 <u>soos</u> , a turve <u>skep</u> , a brine <u>fatt</u> , one <u>hive</u> , one <u>sheld</u> , one <u>skole bord</u> , one pick, a <u>teming shovel</u> , a <u>keyre</u> , a <u>covlrake</u> & half a stone of lead.		3	8
Item 77 olde sheppe	11	11	
Item 32 lambes	2	15	
Item in the hands of Robert Farrow 30 shepe	3	10	
At the West Cote Holme			
Item 2 heapes of turves and the mould ther	14		
Item a salt pan of leade ther	1	5	
Item 4 <u>moulde bewells</u> & ther yockes and all other thinges to them belonging & 3 wood <u>harrowes</u> & an olde harrow, 2 <u>hoppes</u> & 6 mould shovels.	1		
Item 2 sees, a brine <u>fatte</u> , a strike <u>skepp</u> , a <u>hive</u> , a <u>turf skepp</u> , a <u>sheld</u> , a picke, a <u>brothe</u> , a <u>teamyng shovel</u> , a <u>skole bord</u> , a pece of lead.		3	8

It was the larger items of equipment which were employed in the process of collecting the mould. The wooden ‘harrows’ would have been used to rake the beach before the high spring tide; iron harrows would have corroded from constant contact with the salt. The ‘hoppes’ may have been similar to a device called a ‘hap’ which was used in Dumfriesshire, sometimes drawn by a horse, to scrape the surface of the beach to collect up the mould.⁶⁸¹ That may be the case, but it is the four ‘moulde bewells’ here which are listed with ‘ther yockes’. The word ‘bewell’ is usually used in Marshchapel inventories to describe a type of cart which is associated only with salt making and may have been used to transport the mould to the processing site. Alternatively, it has been suggested it may have been a device especially designed with a simple mechanism for scraping the mould from the beach and depositing it in a bowl shaped container, such as has reportedly been observed in the Netherlands.⁶⁸² This could also explain the purpose of a ‘teminge bule’, which appears for example in the inventory of George Brather of

⁶⁸⁰ LAO Inv 34/437.

⁶⁸¹ Sturman, "Salt Making in the Lindsey Marshland in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries."

⁶⁸² David Robinson: Personal Communication.

North Cotes in August 1591, as one which could be tipped to pour out the mould rather than one which needed a ‘team’ or chain to which oxen could be yoked.⁶⁸³

The smaller items of equipment, mostly receptacles, are almost exactly duplicated at the two sites. The ‘soos’, the ‘keyr’ and the vats were wooden receptacles which may have been used for holding the brine. A ‘strike’ was a measure often applied to salt. Though it varied locally, in Marshchapel it was the equivalent of a bushel, as is demonstrated below. A ‘skeppe’ was a wicker work container and also, sometimes, a measure. A ‘hive’ was usually a contrivance of wicker work, resembling a bee hive and used for catching fish. Here it may refer to a conical shaped wicker work container used to allow any surplus liquid to drain off the newly extracted salt, such as has been found at some sites and illustrated in Figure 6.9 above.⁶⁸⁴ The word ‘teyming’ applied to the ‘shovell’ might mean ‘teeming’ in the sense of ‘pouring’. The ‘covlrake’ or ‘cowl rake’ may have been an implement for raking out the ashes, perhaps the ‘sheld’, and the ‘skole bord’ were to protect the worker from the heat of the fire and from being scalded by the hot brine but the ‘brothe’ continues to defy any convincing explanation. It has been suggested that it might be a mixture, such as the ox blood, beer or egg white which are known to have been added to the brine in some places to hasten the removal of impurities. This seems unlikely, placed as it was among the implements. Perhaps it was simply a brush.

Equally intriguing is an item which does not appear in Edmund Cowper’s inventory but is recorded in that of his son, Walter Cowper, in January 1558. His ‘led aschys yn the crysell’, valued at 1s.4d., were listed immediately after his salt pan and before his turves and mould and other essential equipment.⁶⁸⁵ On the other hand, in July 1594 when the goods of Thomas Nevell were appraised ‘the crysle, barrow & shaftes with other implementes in the coates’ worth 6s.8d. were listed after the other implements.⁶⁸⁶ Perhaps the ‘led aschys’ were pieces of lead while the ‘crysell’ could have been a container or even a receptacle in which it could be processed. The ‘barrow’ is said to have been a basket made of twigs and willow which was used for drying out the salt.⁶⁸⁷

⁶⁸³ LAO Inv 81/495.

⁶⁸⁴ Agricola, *De Re Metallica*.book ii ,pp.546-55; Bridbury, *England and the Salt Trade in the Later Middle Ages*.p.4-6.

⁶⁸⁵ LAO Inv 16/6.

⁶⁸⁶ LAO Inv 88/65.

⁶⁸⁷ Brownrigg, *The Art of Making Common Salt*.p.102.

It may be worth noting that in Thomas Nevell's inventory the implements were said to be 'in the cotes'. This may support the theory that the hut was used for storage rather than as a boiling house.

Mould, turves and salt

The salt-impregnated sand, known in this locality as 'mould', was the vital raw material for the salt making process and the peat or 'turves' was the fuel required to heat the brine once it had been filtered from the 'mould'. Peat may also have been used in the filtering process. These items are listed only occasionally in inventories and, unfortunately, the finished product itself, the salt, is recorded even more rarely amongst the goods of the deceased. Where 'mould', 'turves' or salt appear they are associated with ownership of salt pans and quantities might be expected to vary with the season. The mould was freely available to the tenant of the salt cote holme once he had paid his rent. Collection and processing may have been labour intensive but must have been cheap enough and added sufficient value to make the industry economically viable. The peat had to be bought in, mostly by keel from the Humberhead Levels.⁶⁸⁸ Debts owed in Fishlake and Thorne by John Kirmond of North Cotes in 1529 were probably for peat and in May 1586, John Lupton of North Cotes owed Edward Watson of Rawclyffe, £2.13s.4d. for 'a kele boke of redde turves'.⁶⁸⁹ In 1569 John Dawson of Marshchapel owed five nobles to a John Masters 'and he delyver me one black bowke of torffes' and 13s.4d. to John Hornsby and 'he to delyver me one black bowke for 5 marke and one strike of salt'.⁶⁹⁰ The 'bowke' may have been some form of container and, in this context, seems to imply a specific measure. There is no indication of the quantities of peat or salt-impregnated sand owned by Charles Dawson or George Brather but in both cases the value of the peat which they had bought was nearly double that of the unprocessed 'mould'. It is clear that they must have had to produce a considerable amount of salt if they were to have made a profit.

6.7 Seasonality

The assumption that the work was strictly seasonal may have arisen originally from a misunderstanding of the expression 'spring tides' as it was used in the cartouche on the survey map of 1595. Presumably, Haiwarde was referring to the fortnightly high tides

⁶⁸⁸ Sturman, "Salt Making in the Lindsey Marshland in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries.", p.54.

⁶⁸⁹ LAO Inv 2/18, LAO Inv 73/106.

⁶⁹⁰ LAO Inv 50/288.

which occur all year round. However, in a paper delivered to the conference in Colchester in 1974, after quoting from the cartouche, Ethel Rudkin explained to her audience, 'So here we find that salt making was a seasonal job, and not an all-the-year-round one, because only the salt left after the spring tides was used'.⁶⁹¹ The misconception was then perpetuated based largely on the additional evidence that medieval salt rents were payable on Saint Botolph's day, 17th June, and Michaelmas Day, 29th September, whereas cash was paid at other times of the year.⁶⁹² There seems to have been some change in this arrangement, at least for the Willoughby tenants, by the end of the sixteenth century. In 1587 Nicholas and Richard Gering were to pay their money rent in two equal instalments 'at two usual days or feastes in the year viz.' the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, 25th March, and on the feast of Saint Michael the Archangel. The salt rent was to be paid in one instalment on Saint Michael's day.⁶⁹³ Walter Harpham's indenture is not quite so clear for he was also to pay his money rent on the 'two usual feasts or termes in the year' and to pay 'one sesterne of salte at the tymes and termes accustomed'.⁶⁹⁴

Evidence from probate inventories makes it clear that large quantities of unprocessed 'moulde' as well as peat remained at some salt making sites well into the autumn and even as late as January. It would appear that, though the mould may have been collected some time earlier, the processing went on well beyond the summer months. In October in the mid 1550s, Michael East left 'mould' valued at £3 and salt worth £1.7s and, in October 1556, Charles Dawson's 'turves' were valued at £13, his 'moulde' at £8, and his salt at £1. Amongst the debts of the former is one of £1.5s owed to Master Hilyard for 16 'stryke salte', almost certainly a salt rent. In January 1572, John Roche of North Cotes had 'certayne sand wherof salt is made' worth £3.6s.8d. In August 1591, George Brather of the same parish was possessed of 'turves' to the value of £30 and 'mould' valued at £16.⁶⁹⁵

No doubt the best time to collect the mould would be during the summer months but perhaps the salt barons were opportunistic and would take advantage of any suitable

⁶⁹¹ Rudkin, "Medieval Salt Making in Lincolnshire."

⁶⁹² Ibid, Rudkin and Owen, "The Medieval Salt Industry in the Lindsey Marshland." p.81.

⁶⁹³ LAO H7/1.

⁶⁹⁴ LAO H7/13.

⁶⁹⁵ LAO Inv 28/119, LAO Inv 28/261, LAO Inv 53/116, LAO Inv 81/459.

weather if there were labour available and a demand for the product. Equally, the timing of the processing of the mould might depend on demand, the availability of labour and the weather. Brownrigg described how in Ulverstone in the mid-eighteenth century:

The sand is only collected in dry weather, when the sea water has been exhaled from it by the sun, and the rains have not washed the salt out of it. At such time and in such places they rake up the sand into heaps, to the depth of two or three inches, and convey it to their works in carts; laying it up in a large heap, where it is exposed to the weather, and subject to be much injured by rains. They therefore work it up with all diligence, and rarely boil any salt in the winter season.⁶⁹⁶

At each fortnightly low tide, so long as the weather was suitable, the mould would have to be collected and the beach harrowed in preparation for the next tide. This was probably a time for working ‘with all diligence’ though we saw that Edmund Cowper did not appear to be in such great haste. Meanwhile the filtration unit would need to be made ready and the hearth prepared. Washing the salt out of the mould and heating the concentrated brine to extract the salt must have been labour intensive and time consuming operations. At Ulverstone it was observed that once the brine had been prepared ‘they boil it with turf fires in small leaden pans; in which they only make two gallons of salt at each process, which is usually performed in four hours’.⁶⁹⁷ Small wonder then if there was sometimes unprocessed mould on site well into the winter months.

6.8 Output and distribution

Although ‘mould’, turves and, sometimes, salt are valued in probate inventories, quantities are rarely given. The debts of the salters, as they appear in probate inventories, provide the best clues to an assessment of the quantity of salt being produced and its value in the sixteenth century, but the number of examples are few and appear inconsistent. Quantities are variously expressed in pecks, strikes, bushels, quarters and ‘cesters’ or ‘systers’ and, in one case, as ‘frondilles’. The peck was equal to two gallons and there were four pecks in a strike. The strike was the most common measurement employed and it was also the name given to the cylindrical wooden vessel which would contain that quantity. It was usually the equivalent of the bushel, though the bushel did vary. In the Isle of Axholme, for example, the bushel was twice the quantity of the more

⁶⁹⁶ Brownrigg, *The Art of Making Common Salt*. pp.135-137.

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid.p.37

generally recognised bushel.⁶⁹⁸ There is one document which sheds light on the relationship between the strike and the north-east Lindsey bushel. Bernard Crowston of Marshchapel and John Crowston of North Cotes bought land in Wragholme on which a salt rent of 19 strikes and one peck was due to George Heneage of Hainton. It was agreed that Bernard should provide six strikes and three pecks and George would provide 12 strikes and two pecks all payable on the 20th July annually. This indicates that a strike of salt was equal to a capacity of four pecks, the equivalent of eight gallons or one bushel.⁶⁹⁹

Where a value has been given for a number of strikes, it has been possible to calculate the cost of one strike. Quantity and price appear together in only 15 Marshchapel inventories between 1545 and 1616. The price ranges from 9¼d. per strike in 1545 to 2s.4d. in 1608 but both these figures are exceptional. In seven other inventories dated 1608, the prices range from 1s.5d. to 1s.8d. per strike and most commonly, the price is close to 1s.6d., almost double the price in 1545. According to Bridbury, the average price of a quarter of salt in England between 1351 and 1400 was 6s.4d.⁷⁰⁰ As the quarter was equal to eight bushels or strikes, the average strike would have been worth 9½d.⁷⁰¹ This contrasts sharply with the salt prices Rudkin and Owen claim to have found in the Fulstow court rolls in the mid-fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. These varied from 2s.6d. a 'strike skep' in 1343 to 6s.8d. in 1408 and 1412, the average being 4s.9d.⁷⁰² A possible explanation for the discrepancy could be that Rudkin and Owen have assumed that the measure was always a strike when the price quoted was, perhaps, for a quarter. In 1446 the manor court set the price of a 'cester' at 4s.2d.⁷⁰³ This, too, would be consistent with Bridbury's figures if a 'cester' were the equivalent of a quarter. A final piece of supporting evidence for this argument is taken from Hughes. In 1588, the City of York complained about the price of salt set by Thomas Wilkes, who had been granted the monopoly for 21 years of the supply of salt to Boston, Lynn and Hull. Wilkes agreed to reduce the price from 16d to 14d a bushel.⁷⁰⁴ It seems that

⁶⁹⁸ OED; Bristow, *The Local Historians Glossary and Vade Mecum*.

⁶⁹⁹ LAO AH 1/4/1/4/2.

⁷⁰⁰ Bridbury, *England and the Salt Trade in the Later Middle Ages*.p.95.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.p.3.

⁷⁰² Rudkin and Owen, "The Medieval Salt Industry in the Lindsey Marshland."p.83.n.48.

⁷⁰³ E.L. Royall, *The Manorial History of Fulstow* (Ilfracombe: Arthur H. Stockwell, 1977).p.7.

⁷⁰⁴ Hughes, *Studies in Administration and Finance 1558-1825*.pp.54-55.

Marshchapel salt was maintaining its value in relation to national prices in the latter part of the sixteenth century and was, therefore, still a viable option.

The documents relating to those who controlled the salterns have provided little indication about the quantity of salt being produced, so one might be tempted to stretch too far the evidence contained in the occasional exceptional document. The evidence derived from the probate inventory of George Clarke of North Cotes, drawn up in March 1608, should, perhaps, be treated with caution. He appears no longer to have been actively involved in the salt industry by the time of his death for his ‘moulde bewel’, the only item of salt making equipment listed amongst his possessions, was ‘in the handes of John Pearson’. The total value of his possessions and the money owing to him barely covered his debts. Unusually, the first items listed in his inventory were the debts owing to him. They included the debts of nine salters, which together amounted to £9.2s.6d for a total of 116 strikes of salt, a little more than 1s.6d per strike.⁷⁰⁵ This may have been less than the year’s output or, perhaps, the debts may have accumulated over a period of time but it does seem to offer a glimpse at the quantities involved. If the North Cotes pan was a similar size to that employed at Ulverstone, George Clarke’s 116 strikes of salt would have required an investment of 1,856 hours, that is, more than 22 weeks, working 12 hours per day seven days a week, to extract the salt from something in the region of 8,000 gallons of concentrated brine.

The same document may hint at the size of the task facing the salters. The first three debts listed in George Clarke’s inventory were those of the three Ramsley brothers. Arthur owed £1.15s.6d for 25 strikes of salt and George and Walter each owed £1.5s.6d for 17 strikes. These alone are considerable quantities to move over distances by horse and cart and they may have bought salt elsewhere that year, perhaps in their own parish of Marshchapel. There is evidence that, in the fourteenth century, Fulstow salters traded at Gainsborough in the west and at the market in Kirton Lindsey in the north of the county, not far from what is now known as the A15, but was previously Ermine Street, the old Roman road to the north.⁷⁰⁶ It has been proposed elsewhere that salters’ routes have lived on in folk memory. One such route is said to have been followed by the

⁷⁰⁵ LAO LCC Admons 1609, 295.

⁷⁰⁶ Rudkin and Owen, "The Medieval Salt Industry in the Lindsey Marshland." p.78. LAO KR 87m 2, R. Sillem, ed., *Some Sessions of the Peace in Lincolnshire*, p.89, vol. 30, *The Publications of the Lincoln Record Society* (Lincoln: Boydell Press for Lincoln Record Society, 1936).

salters from the Lindsey coast and there is some supporting evidence in place names. The salters may have left the coast by Salters Way, now Fire Beacon Lane, which marks the parish boundary between Grainthorpe and Fulstow, and headed south west across the wolds via Salters' Hill near North Ormsby, through Ludford, where there is a row of houses known as 'Salter Cottages', and on through Sixhills and Holton Beckering to Langworth where they could continue to Lincoln along the route which was known as Saltergate.⁷⁰⁷ There is evidence in the landscape to suggest that there may have been a travellers' route to Lincoln via Ludford but no firm indication that Marshchapel salters traded there.

Firm evidence for the extent of the salters' area of trade in the sixteenth century is sparse but the evidence that is available suggests that they served a relatively local market. It is only in the lists of debts and credits of some of the salters that a possible indication of their area of operation can be found. Among debts owing to William Provest of Marshchapel in 1569 were sums of money from men in Gainsborough and Stow to the west and Barnard Hobson of Ludney in Grainthorpe was owed £2 in Binbrook.⁷⁰⁸ In 1582 Robert Gibbon had debts owing from Thoresby (or Firsby), Saleby, Mumby, Sloothby and Bilsby which would suggest a route to the south, possibly through Castle Carton where the hayward 'had a right to take his horn full of salt from every cart taking that article through the parish'.⁷⁰⁹

6.9 The end of the salt making industry on the Lindsey marshland

The salt industry on the north east Lindsey coast may have declined steadily over a long period. At the time of the Domesday survey, there were 26 salterns and only half that number in 1595. The decline of the herring industry and the general turning away from the sea were, no doubt contributory factors. In 1571, Holinshed recorded, there was a great flood 'when all the salt cotes where the chief and finest salt was made were utterly destroyed to the utter undoing of manye a man and great lamentation of olde and younge'.⁷¹⁰ There is no evidence in the documents that this 'great flood' had affected

⁷⁰⁷ Rudkin and Owen, "The Medieval Salt Industry in the Lindsey Marshland." p.84

⁷⁰⁸ LAO Inv 49/267, LAO Inv 81/472.

⁷⁰⁹ LAO Inv 70/255, Sturman, "Salt Making in the Lindsey Marshland in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries." p.53.

⁷¹⁰ Rudkin and Owen, "The Medieval Salt Industry in the Lindsey Marshland." p.79-80.

the salterns of the north east Lindsey coast. Salt making seems to have continued in Marshchapel uninterrupted for another 30 years.

Competition from Bay salt has often been blamed for the decline of the salt making industry in the area. However, by the time that Elizabeth succeeded to the throne in 1558, she and her parliament were aware of the danger of relying too heavily on supplies of salt from abroad. The trade was often disrupted by the internal problems of producing countries, by hostilities and war and even by pirates. The cost of transport increased the price and there were fears that supplies might fail to meet the nation's requirements.⁷¹¹ There was a move to develop the home industry to avoid the need to depend on French salt. This coincided with the expansion of the industry around the Tyne and on the Firth of Forth, where coal was used as the fuel to produce salt from sea water. In 1585 Thomas Wilkes was granted a monopoly for 21 years for the supply of salt to Boston and Lynn and the following year to Hull. Although this was intended to encourage the English industry, much of the salt was brought from the Forth.⁷¹² As early as 1565 attempts were being made to encourage English salt makers to adopt new methods in order to increase production of 'the maine and most necessary commoditye which our countrie wanteth'.⁷¹³ In 1625, the Lymington salt makers were being urged to accept the new ways, which involved the use of 'floore pans' instead of sand mounds and iron instead of lead pans.⁷¹⁴

Perhaps one of the most telling pieces of evidence is that provided by Whatley in his study of the Scottish salt industry between 1570 and 1850. He compared the output of an Annandale salt pan in use there between the seventeenth to the nineteenth century with the output of a pan used in the salt works of the Firth of Forth in the eighteenth century. The sand washing method was used in Annandale, the brine being evaporated over a peat fire in rectangular lead pans with a depth of 4ins. and sides measuring 4ft. by 3ft, which would be similar in size and shape to those that it is proposed may have been in use on the Lindsey marsh in the sixteenth century. Unlike the Marshchapel salt makers of the sixteenth century, they used their pans in pairs. In the eighteenth century

⁷¹¹ BL Mss La.52.23, C.A.Whatley, *The Scottish Salt Industry 1570 to 1850: an economic and social history*, Hughes, *Studies in Administration and Finance 1558-1825*.p.37.

⁷¹² Hughes, *Studies in Administration and Finance 1558-1825*.pp.46-47.

⁷¹³ Ibid.p.37.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid.pp.35,37,85.

on the Firth of Forth, where coal was used to extract salt from sea water, the iron pans were four or five times larger. The output of the larger pan was about 60 bushels a week whereas the Annandale pan, at best, could produce 20 bushels, though the actual output was usually much less because of interruptions caused by bad weather or the need for repairs.⁷¹⁵

Salt was being produced in Scotland on a much larger scale. Coal was readily available for fuel, sea water was more saline in the sheltered inlets and there was no need for the sand washing process. Salt could easily be transported down the coast by sea. The method of production on the north-east Lindsey coast, in comparison, was small scale, inefficient, laborious and labour intensive. There had once have been some local supplies of peat but they had long since been exhausted and fuel had to be bought in at increased cost.⁷¹⁶ In spite of the competition, the Marshchapel salt makers could have continued to supply local and domestic needs, as they may have been doing in the latter half of the sixteenth century. They could produce high quality, pure, fine, white salt suitable for making cheese and butter. But there were other forces at work nationally and locally.

With the rise in population and the growth of towns there was a increasing tendency towards specialisation and larger units of production, a trend which applied to salt making and as well as to farming. The demand for wool to supply the expanding domestic textile industry and for meat to feed the population of the growing towns, increased during the seventeenth century.⁷¹⁷ Although the average farmer in Marshchapel may have been keeping fewer animals, the size of the flocks of the wealthier farmers was increasing. The large flock held by Storre Crowston at his death provides an example of the trend.⁷¹⁸ His name suggests the union of two of the wealthier, long established local families. Mary Storre and John Crowston married in 1614. Their son, Storre, was baptised in 1617 but was 'drowned and buried at sea' two and a half years later. Another Storre Crowston was baptised in 1631. There were incomers, too, who were looking to make a profit from their newly acquired lands. The

⁷¹⁵ C.A.Whatley, *The Scottish Salt Industry 1570 to 1850: an economic and social history*.p.13.

⁷¹⁶ Sturman, "Salt Making in the Lindsey Marshland in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries."pp.53-54.

⁷¹⁷ Adrian Bell, Chris Brooks, and Paul Dryburgh, *The English Wool Market, c1230-1327* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).p.151.

⁷¹⁸ Joan Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming: The Agrarian History of Lincolnshire from Tudor to Recent Times*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Methuen, 1957).pp.151-153. LAO Inv 190/-.

demand for pasture to feed the ever increasing numbers of sheep must have influenced the decision to drain the coastal marshes.

It is not possible to make a direct comparison between the profits made from sheep rearing and those made from salt making but it seems the rewards of the former were, probably, greater. In Chapter Five we saw that a farmer could buy 20 sheep for £8 in the spring, feed them on the marsh during the summer and sell them in the autumn at a profit of £6. That would seem to be an easier way of making £6 than producing 80 bushels of salt at 1s.6d. a bushel. The comparison does not take into account the salt maker's outlay on fuel, equipment and labour, for which there is too little evidence to estimate. Nor does it take into account the cost of renting the land; an acre of salt marsh was valued at 1d a year and an acre of pasture at 3s.6d.⁷¹⁹

We have seen that there was a national trend amongst land holders to look at new ways to maximise profits from their estates and one of those ways could be the draining of marshland. Both Queen Elizabeth and James I were short of money and anxious to find new sources of income. The surveys of the Duchy of Lancaster in 1564-5 and 1608, and the survey of the marshes of Holland and Lindsey in 1613 show where their interests lay.⁷²⁰ The General Drainage Act of 1600 facilitated reclamation and Vermuyden's activities in the Lincolnshire fens may have encouraged others to seek the financial benefits of draining the marshes. The piecemeal reclamation of land from the sea on the East Lindsey marshes had been an ongoing, though mostly unrecorded, process for centuries. In 1565 the Commissioners reported that 163 acres of ground called South Marsh had been 'lately gained from the sea' in Tetney; salt making had ceased there by 1604.⁷²¹ William Bennet of North Cotes still had salt making implements 'in and about the salt cotes' in March 1624. He also had mould and 'turves' valued at £5 but he may have ceased operating before that date: instead of a salt pan he had 24 stone of lead valued at £1.⁷²² In 1608 there were 14 salt cotes still standing in North Cotes but only two of them were still in use, the others were 'decayed'. The tenants were criticised for concealing the fact that 'by reason of great working and means of the said salt coates the rage of the sea hath been broken' so that they 'won ground from the town of North

⁷¹⁹ TNA E178 4063.

⁷²⁰ TNA DL 42, 119, TNA DL 44,33, TNA E178 4063.

⁷²¹ Rudkin and Owen, "The Medieval Salt Industry in the Lindsey Marshland."p.79.

⁷²² LAO Inv 129/196.

Coates east upon the sea' and so avoiding paying the appropriate rent on the 600 acres involved. It was, also, reported that 'the inhabitants made a bank 40 years ago which is seen manifestly and most apparent at this day'. The bank enclosed 250 acres known as the Corn Field and the tenants 'pretend it is part of their copies'. The Commissioners recorded that 'such lands as the King's Majesty's tenants hath by copie are letten to undertenants to a high valuation'.⁷²³

There were salt cotes still standing in Marshchapel in 1613 but some of the salt cote holmes had become 'firme and pasture groundes' valued at 3s.6d. an acre whereas the salt marsh was considered to be worth only one penny an acre.⁷²⁴ This fact alone would have been a convincing argument in favour of reclamation. It is clear from a manorial survey of 1638 that sometime before that date a sea bank had been raised on the seaward side of the salterns at Marshchapel, 600 acres of marsh had been reclaimed and the salt cote holmes were in use for pasture.⁷²⁵ It is unlikely that salt making continued in Wragholme, Ludney and Grainthorpe into the 1620s as has been suggested on the grounds that salt rents were still being paid. Thomas Heneage was collecting salt rent of 15 quarters and two strikes from 15 tenants in Wragholme in 1621.⁷²⁶ Salt rents were often commuted to money rents based on the price of salt and continued to be paid after salt production had ceased.

Unfortunately, there appears to be no record of the process of decision making which led to the reclamation of the 600 acres of Marshchapel and North Cotes, effected some time before 1638, or the attitudes of the local people.⁷²⁷ Perhaps it was carried out peacefully with the support of the local population or, at least, the landholders. When Endymion Porter set out to reclaim 2000 acres in North Somercotes in 1636, some of the wealthier farmers ordered the inhabitants of the village not to allow the workmen to have 'either meat, drink or lodging there'.⁷²⁸ Once the work was completed, some of the locals destroyed fences and ditches and threatened to break down the banks.⁷²⁹ There is no evidence of such opposition in Marshchapel. Whereas in North Somercotes it was an

⁷²³ TNA DL 42, 119.

⁷²⁴ TNA E178 4063.

⁷²⁵ Rudkin and Owen, "The Medieval Salt Industry in the Lindsey Marshland."p.80; LAO H93/1.

⁷²⁶ LAO Heneage Account Book, Rudkin and Owen, "The Medieval Salt Industry in the Lindsey Marshland."p.77

⁷²⁷ Robinson, "The North East Coast of Lincolnshire: A Study in Coastal Evolution".p.17.,LAO H93/1.

⁷²⁸ LAO Inv 129/257, LAO Inv 154/275, TNA SP 16/271.

⁷²⁹ TNA E125/17.

outsider who had instigated the reclamation and who was to be the main beneficiary, in Marshchapel it was the rising local yeomen and gentry who were set to gain. Sir Peregrine Willoughby who, it has already been observed, had reservations about the value of drainage schemes, died in 1601. His son, Robert, inherited his land in Marshchapel in 1604 and sold it in 1612 to Sir John Hatcher of Careby.⁷³⁰ Perhaps Sir John Hatcher and Henry Hilyard, and other freeholders as well as their major tenants, who included the Nevells, Thomas Dawson, the Storrs, the Crowstons and the family of Walter Harpham's only granddaughter, the Wesleds and the Broxholmes, all would have recognised the benefits of gaining more pasture. The rearing of sheep must have seemed a more pleasant and more lucrative way of making a living, and the thriving textile industry provided a ready market.

6.10 Summary

The story of the salt industry on the north-east Lindsey coast was a long one. Archaeological evidence indicates that it was already established by the late Bronze Age though we cannot be certain that it continued without a break through to the tenth century when further archaeological evidence is available. From that time, it continued until the early seventeenth century. At the time of the Domesday Survey there were 26 salterns in Marshchapel and by 1595 there were only half that number. The decline may have been protracted and slow for it is likely that the decline of the herring industry in the fourteenth century dealt the salt industry a serious blow.

Salt making was a side activity of farming and, certainly by the sixteenth century, it was in the control of a handful of the wealthiest farmers in the parish, who employed the labour and, sometimes skilled salt wellers, to produce the salt. These farmers and their poorer neighbours would have needed salt for domestic purposes but much of the salt was bought by 'salters', local men who earned their living, partly, by carrying the salt in their salt cart to towns and villages further inland. Most of these salters, like the salt wellers, were able to subsidise their income from their trade from the produce of their smallholdings. There is no evidence, for the sixteenth century, that salt was leaving the coast by sea, as had been the case in previous centuries.

⁷³⁰ Williamson, "Some Notes on the Medieval Manors of Fulstow."

The process by which salt was made in this area in the sixteenth century was small scale, slow and labour intensive. We also know that sand washing, the method used in the sixteenth century to extract strengthened brine from salty sand, was not the process employed 600 years earlier, which involved the boiling of sea water. The new method had been developed to reduce the quantity of fuel required in the evaporation process. It is no longer possible to believe that the new idea came with the Anglo-Saxon immigrants, but when it arrived is still not known. Questions remain, too, about the location of the salt cotes in relation to the saltern mounds and the filtration units and hearths. Perhaps in the future, further targeted excavation will answer these questions.

The end of the salt making industry was an outcome of the social and economic changes that were a feature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Rising population helped to create buoyant markets and led to the development of greater specialisation and larger units of production. Soaring inflation allowed some to become rich while others were impoverished. Land became a commodity to be bought and sold. The sense of social responsibility that had once been associated with land holding and wealth was weakened and replaced by the profit motive. It is unlikely that Marshchapel salters, such as the Ramsley brothers, and others whose livelihoods depended on the industry were consulted when decisions were made which would mean an end for salt making. The new generation of wealthy land holders could make greater profits from pasture land and sheep farming.

Although the technology for reclamation had been available for centuries, the communities on the north-east Lindsey coast had chosen instead to exploit the natural resources of the marshland landscape, particularly salt. In the absence of documentary evidence it is possible only to guess how the various socio-economic pressures combined to lead to the decision, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, to build a sea bank in Marshchapel, thus ensuring the end of the salt making industry. As Rippon concluded in his study of coastal wetlands, 'mankind was rarely forced into a certain course of action. The rich ecological mosaic that wetlands constitute offered a series of pathways...many local communities came to many local solutions based upon their perception, and knowledge, of landscape potential and the cost, risks, and benefits of

each landscape utilisation strategy'.⁷³¹ The community of Marshchapel or, at least, those who made the decisions in the early seventeenth century, balanced the cost, risks and benefits of their various options and, in the light of their knowledge and experience, decided that the salt industry was dispensable.

⁷³¹ Rippon, *The Transformation of the Coastal Wetlands: Exploitation and Management of Marshland Landscapes in North West Europe during the Roman and Medieval Periods*.p.270

Conclusion

The Marshchapel of the 1530s, in some respects, was still a medieval society. The lineage of the two lords of the manor, who held two thirds of the parish lands, can be traced back to Domesday. Most of the remaining third belonged to Louth Abbey which, since the twelfth century, had built up its holding in Fulstow and Marshchapel with grants and purchases of land. The arable land of Marshchapel's north and south fields was still divided into furlongs and strips and the peasant farmers held their land by copy of court roll. The salt makers continued to produce their salt, using an archaic process which had, over centuries, left behind it good pasture which formed the basis of the mainly pastoral economy. It was still a deferential society, where each knew his place in the social order, cooperation was necessary and neighbourliness was highly valued. For most, the shared experience of a common faith and the social activity which surrounded the parish church were a unifying bond. The changes which the community experienced over the next century were not revolutionary but they altered, permanently, the nature of this marshland community.

The early history of Marshchapel as a 'daughter' settlement of Fulstow and the gradual accretion of land as the sea receded were important factors in its subsequent social and economic development. Analysis of the 1595 survey of Marshchapel and Fulstow revealed the topography, the land ownership and land use at the end of the sixteenth century. It highlighted the contrasts between the two parishes in their morphology and land use, which reflect both their shared history and the differences in the way in which each had come into being. A new interpretation of the Diocesan Survey of 1563, combined with evidence from the survey map of 1595, indicated that Marshchapel had developed initially as just one of five daughter hamlets of Fulstow which began as salt making settlements and which, by the end of the fourteenth century, were united to form the parish that eventually became known as Marshchapel.

In contrast to some of its neighbours, including North Cotes, and parishes on the south Lindsey marshes, especially around Skegness, where land was threatened by coastal erosion, Marshchapel continued to gain land. The parish had been built on the remains of salt making sites as the salt workers moved gradually eastward over the centuries. With the introduction of the sand washing method, the industrial waste formed great

mounds or ‘maures’, the remains of which can be seen to the east of Sea Dyke Way, in aerial photographs and on the ground (Figure 6.6). These mounds, eventually, made good pasture and there must have come a point at which farming became the main economic activity and salt making took a secondary role (Appendix III). The 1595 survey indicates that the salt marsh of Marshchapel had never been available as common land but, as the sea receded, had been shared between the lords of the manor and leased to tenants, first as salt making sites and, later, as pasture. As pastoral farming became more profitable, the marshland would have attracted the ‘better sort’ who could afford the higher rents, gradually changing the social structure of the community. This process had already begun by 1540, by which time other external factors had come into play. Before moving on to summarise the effect of those external factors, one further way in which the marshland environment affected social and economic life of Marshchapel deserves attention.

It is possible that malaria was endemic in Marshchapel, as in other areas of fen and marshland. The population of Marshchapel declined between 1540 and 1640 when, in most parts of the country, the population increased. Burials consistently outnumbered baptisms in the years between 1590 and 1640, the years for which the register is extant. The marshland may have been an especially unhealthy place to live; other low lying coastal settlements experienced a similar demographic trend. The poor, especially newcomers, were particularly vulnerable. Malaria would have sapped energy, lowered resistance to disease and generally led to a poor quality of life. The high mortality rate led to further hardship for surviving orphans and for families left without a breadwinner, who then became more vulnerable to poverty, hunger and disease.

The population of Marshchapel was highly geographically mobile. The high mortality rate on the marshland and the growing population elsewhere may have contributed to immigration into Marshchapel, as widows and widowers found new partners and labourers came seeking work. There were tradesmen and craftsmen among the immigrants as well as poor travellers and beggars, whose names appeared only in the burial register. There were a few substantial farmers amongst the immigrants who, it seems, were willing to risk the dangers of the marshland environment to increase the size of their land holdings. Migration was not all one way. There were those who left the parish, including young people who went into service, some who found marriage

partners in other parishes and others who found work or land elsewhere. The high level of geographical mobility may have affected the social structure of the parish and, though it is impossible to quantify, increased the number of labouring poor.

Analysis of probate inventories indicates that Marshchapel was becoming an increasingly polarised society. The high level of inflation of this period exacerbated the growing gap between rich and poor. The smaller husbandman, who in good times, struggled to feed himself and his family, was increasingly in danger of losing his land and joining the ranks of the labouring poor. Periods of poor harvests or illness put his livelihood in jeopardy and inflation increased the risk. His more fortunate neighbours could acquire the land that became available in this way and make good profits as the price of agricultural produce increased. Those entirely dependent on wage labour rarely left probate inventories but they suffered severe hardship at this time, as the rise in wages failed to keep pace with inflation.

The availability of land of former monastic houses enabled wealthier farmers to increase their holdings and so raise their social status and standard of living. This process seems to have been well under way in Marshchapel by 1595 when, it is clear from the survey, that most of the land was already concentrated in the hands of the few wealthy Marshchapel farmers, whether as freeholders or tenants. Other land became available as some farmers lost their land through impoverishment or illness. Partible inheritance did not appear to be a major factor in the breaking up of land holdings as Fleet found on the Isle of Axholme.⁷³² Primogeniture was the usual custom of inheritance in Marshchapel, though fathers tried to make some provision for all their children. In doing so, they often walked a fine line.

The century between 1540 and 1640 saw a change in attitudes to land ownership. Amongst the gentry, there was a new interest in maximising profits from their land. Inflation had lowered the value of the income they received from their tenants in rents but increased the potential for profit making. By the end of the sixteenth century, the tenancies of land held by the two lords of the manor in Fulstow and Marshchapel had all been changed from the traditional copyhold to leasehold, ensuring shorter tenancies and

⁷³² Peter Fleet, "The Isle of Axholme, 1540-1640. Economy and Society" (PhD, University of Nottingham, 2002).

higher rents. There was a new found interest in the adoption of new methods of farming to increase output and in improvement schemes which could add value to the land. The commissioning of surveys was another manifestation of the new approach. Land became a commodity to be bought and sold, an attitude that had its echo amongst the rising yeomen. Land no longer carried with it the obligations of the past.

Thirsk maintained that the marshland peasant was the richest of his class in the sixteenth century but, by 1630, had fallen behind the rest of the Lincolnshire peasantry in wealth and scale of farming enterprise.⁷³³ This is not the impression gained from the documents available for Marshchapel. There had been a change in the social structure. There was much poverty but there were, also, some wealthy farmers. Though the salt industry had gone, the woollen industry appeared to be thriving. Instead of salters, there were carpenters in Marshchapel and there were masons in neighbouring parishes. Though it has not been quantified, the impression gained from inventories is of an improving standard of living which manifested itself in the larger and better furnished houses of the wealthier farmers in Marshchapel. The appearance of successful mercers in the area must indicate that some sections of the community had money to spend.

A change in attitude towards their neighbours seemed to be observable amongst the new generation of wealthier farmers of Marshchapel. The level of basic literacy had risen during this period, especially among men, but sons of yeoman were increasingly receiving a university education, which had the potential to set them apart from their poorer neighbours in the parish and to give them access to the culture of the gentry. This may have contributed to a decline in the sense of responsibility that the 'better sort' had traditionally owed to their poorer neighbours. Legacies to the poor man's box and to individual named poor had been usual in Marshchapel wills of the sixteenth century. They became increasingly rare in the seventeenth, though it is clear that there were still many people in need. It may have been, in part, an unintended consequence of the introduction of the Poor Law. However, the evidence in the patterns of bequests suggests that the growing economic and social gap had resulted in a change in the traditional relationship between rich and poor in Marshchapel.

⁷³³ Joan Thirsk, ed., *The Agrarian History of England and Wales 1500 to 1640*, vol. IV, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).p.147.

For many, the changes in religious doctrine under the Tudor and the Stuart monarchs raised doubts and uncertainty and, for some, led to a questioning of long accepted doctrines and practices. The evidence in preambles of Marshchapel wills suggests that there were some more radical Protestants amongst the elite. However, the wealthy were more likely than their poorer neighbours to have had the time, the money and the skills to give free expression to their religious convictions. We can know little of the attitudes of the poor but the words of Theodore Squire come down to us through the centuries, ‘The people turneth not unto him that smiteth them neither doe they seeke the Lord of Hoasts’. Perhaps, in general, the overriding attitude was one of apathy. There is evidence of divergence of belief, locally. No evidence was found of open hostility between those of different allegiances in Marshchapel but the change may have been divisive or, at least, have loosened the bonds that had previously bound communities together in their shared faith.

The history of the Marshchapel salt making industry illustrates how socioeconomic factors influenced the way in which a community chose to use a ‘marginal’ landscape. It also provides an example of how external and local factors interacted to bring about change. The earliest settlers exploited the natural resources of the environment, making salt and grazing their animals. As the sea receded, agriculture became a more important part of the economy and some ‘modification’ of the landscape took place; to increase productivity, water ways were channelled and banks were built. The salt makers made a contribution to this modification by leaving behind them huge mounds of industrial remains, the ‘maures’, which eventually became good pasture. Salt continued to be an important part of the economy into the Middle Ages, when it played a significant role in the European market. The industry may have lost its pre-eminence in the Marshchapel economy because of competition from salt producers elsewhere or, perhaps, it was the success of the home grown woollen industry in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries which persuaded local farmers to concentrate their resources on sheep rearing.

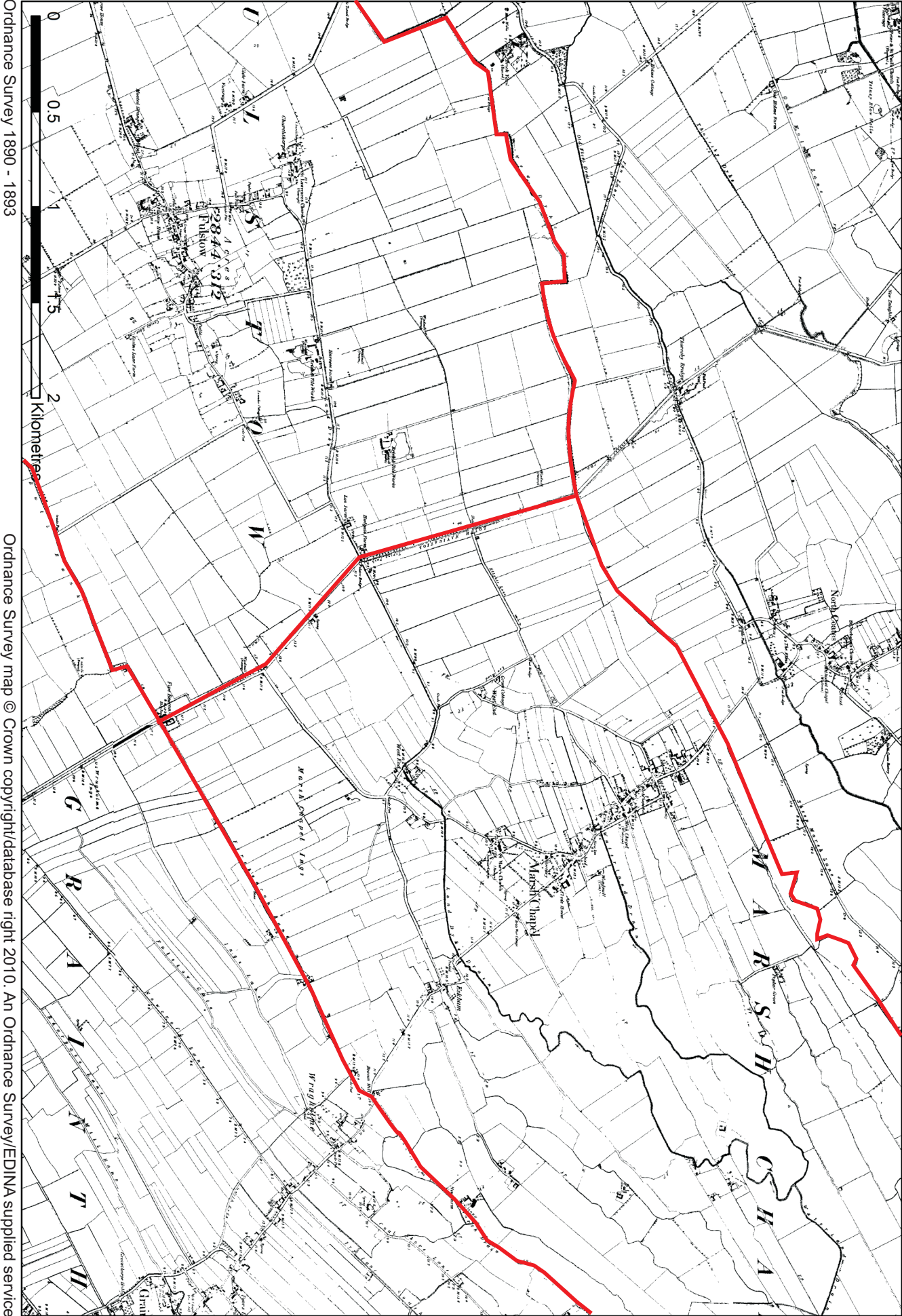
The trade in raw wool faltered in the fifteenth century but by, 1540, it had been replaced by a thriving textile industry. Meanwhile, with the rise in population and the growth of towns, there was a tendency towards greater specialisation and larger units of production. The Marshchapel salt industry remained small scale and outdated. In the early seventeenth century, the renewed demand for wool may have influenced the

decision to go to the expense of reclamation, thus ‘transforming’ the landscape. So came to an end an industry which had been a feature of the social and economic life of this community since its very beginning. There is no record of the attitudes of the local community. The lords of the manor could increase their rents and the handful of wealthy farmers, who had controlled the salt industry, would have benefited from the creation of more pasture and may have been complicit with the innovators. The skills of the salt wellers and the services of the salters were no longer needed.

By 1640 Marshchapel had undergone deep and lasting change, both socially and economically. There was an increased differential between rich and poor in their wealth, in their standard of living and in their culture. The size of the largest holdings had grown, there were fewer smaller holdings and more landless labourers. The church was no longer the unifying force it once had been. The bonds which had held communities together had been weakened. These were outcomes of the interaction of social and economic forces which affected the whole country with local attitudes and conditions. In Marshchapel, the marshland environment had played a significant role.

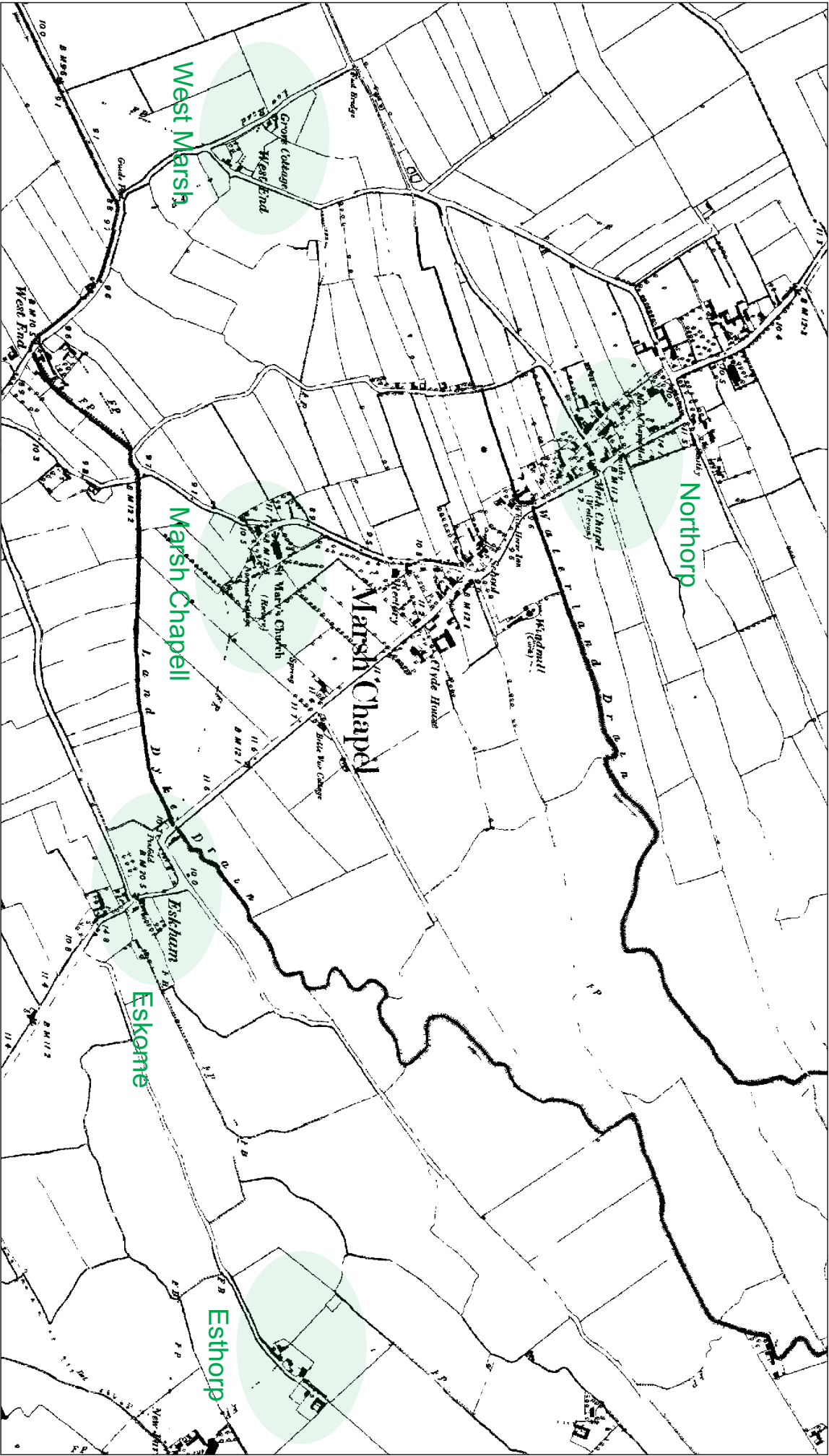
Appendix I

Fulstow and its 'daughter' parish Marshchapel



Appendix II

Conjectural sites of the five hamlets of Marshchapel in 1563



Ordnance Survey 1890 - 1893

Ordnance Survey map © Crown copyright/database right 2010. An Ordnance Survey/EDINA supplied service.

Appendix III

Extract from the survey of the Marshes 1613 TNA E178 4063

William Campion of Marshchappell in the countie aforesaid, aged fiftie and fower yeres or thereabouts sworne and executed before the commission aforesaid the daye and yere above said, saith and deposeth as followeth:

To the second interrogatorie he saith that there are certaine landes lyinge betwixt the before menconed sea banks and holmes and other groundes called the fitties, called by the names of salt coates, salt coates holmes and mottyns and that the said fitties doe extend themselves to the sea, all with land byn gained, left bare and drie by and from the sea and further to this interrogatorie he cannot depose.

To the third and fourth interrogatories he saith that the said saltcoate holmes are by nature fresh by reason of the greatnes of the hilles which were made by makinge of salte, and since not overflowen by the sea and that some of them have att the time of this deponents examinacon certaine houses called by the name of salt coates yet standing upon the same and that the same are become pasture groundes and are worth to be letten by the yeare three shillings fower pence per acre. And that the said mottyns and fitties are by nature salte by reason of the overflowing of the sea and are for the most parte become firme groundes and are worth being letten by the yeare one penny per acre and further to this interrogatorie he cannot depose.

To the fifthe interrogatorie he saith that the said severall salt coate homes, mottyns and fitties are in the occupation of diverse inhabitants of the towne of Fulstowe Marshe also Marsh Chappell videlicet Thomas Philipps gent Thomas Hagg, Thomas Nevell and William Storre who as tenantes to Sir Christopher Hillyard knight and the said Thomas Philipps, Moyses Mumbye, Thomas Hammerton and Roberte Hurste as tenants to Sir John Hatcher knight and Thomas Dawson gent as tenante of severall partes of the said groundes to George Allington Esquire, Sir Robert Newcombe knight and Alexander Emerson yeoman doe and have taken the profits of the said salt coate holmes, mottyns and fitties by lease for certaine yeares yet to come, but what the profite thereof doe or have accounted unto hee knoweth nott, and further to this interrogatorie he cannot depose.

Glossary

Sources: Oxford English Dictionary on line <http://www.oed.com> relaunched 30 November 2010; The Local Historian's Glossary of Words and Terms, Joy Bristow, 3rd edition. 2001; A Dictionary of old Trades, Titles and Occupations, Colin Waters, 2nd edition, 2002; Liable to Floods, J.R. Ravensdale, Cambridge, 1974.

Barrow: conical basket made from twigs and willow in which the wet salt was drained.

Bewell, buile, buyll, bewell cart: a kind of cart which is associated, locally, with salt making activity; possibly a hand cart as the word 'bewell' in some contexts means handle. However, they also appear with 'yockes' which suggests that they might have been attached to draught animals. Often appear in inventories in connection with 'mould', salt laden sand collected from the surface of the beach from which the salt was extracted.

Bittern: the bitter salts which remain after the extraction of common salt from sea water.

Butt, butte: flat fish, for example, sole, plaice, halibut.

Caid, cade: tame, pet, for example, hand reared lamb.

Carte, sea card: map, sea chart.

Chapelry: a division of a large parish having its own chapel.

Coates, cotes: huts, for example, salt cotes.

Cobble, coble: a flat bottomed sea fishing vessel of a kind which had been in use on the north-east coast since the fourteenth century. Its unique design made it easier to launch and to haul back up the beach. Cobbles varied in size and elsewhere were known as 'luggers' because of their dipping lug sail.

Dythes, dithes: Lincolnshire term for cow-dung, dried and cut into squares for fuel.

Elger: eel spear.

Fathene: 'a fathene of new nett'; possibly a specific quantity or a bundle.

Firrette, firret: ferret.

Fitties: local term for salt marshes, from the Norse for salt pastures; that part of the foreshore which was drowned by the spring tides.

Gade, elle gade: a two pronged fork for catching eels.

Garth: a small piece of enclosed ground usually associated with a house or other building, used as a yard, garden or paddock.

Gere: gear.

Grosgrain: a corded fabric of, for example, silk or mohair; from the French for coarse grain.

Hamlet: a settlement without a church included in the parish of another village.

Harrowe, harrowes: a heavy frame of timber or iron set with iron teeth or tines which was dragged over ploughed land to break clods, stir the soil, root up weeds or cover seed. Locally, in salt making, a wooden harrow was dragged over the beach after the high spring tides to facilitate the collection of salty sand or 'moulde'. They were sometimes made in two halves and then locally known as 'the harrows'.

Hawser: a rope or cable such as might be used to be stretched across a creek to support short baited lines at regular intervals.

Holme: literally means 'small island' but here refers to the areas of mounds left behind after salt making.

Hop, hope: possibly similar to the 'hap' which was used in Dumfriesshire, sometimes drawn by a horses, to scrape the surface of the beach to collect the 'mould'.

Ioisted: in the context used in the field book, land 'ioisted out' amongst certain tenants, suggests that it means 'shared out'.

Keel, keele: flat bottomed sailing boat used for carrying cargo, for example grain, to market.

Kine: cows; usually the milking cows in a herd.

Marfar: as in 'marfar for the common cow'; possibly a small piece of enclosed ground.

Maile, mayle, maylle: large nets used in fishing and fowling.

Maure: a hill, possibly derived from a 'maur hill', an ant hill. Locally in salt making, it referred to the huge mound of sand which was left behind after the salt had been extracted.

Melster: malster; brewer.

Mercer: originally a general merchant but, by the sixteenth century, beginning to mean one who dealt chiefly in textiles.

Messuage: a dwelling house and its appurtenances.

Mottye: hilly, possibly derived from 'motte'. In the context of 'mottye ground', possibly refers to the uneven ground left after salt making.

Mould, moulde: a general word for surface soil; used locally in the context of salt making to denote the salty sand which was collected from the beach and from which the salt was extracted.

Nates: nets.

Pannell: Saddle cushion, a piece of cloth placed under the saddle to protect the horse's back.

Pinder: the official responsible for impounding stray animals.

Pingle: A small enclosed piece of land, a paddock or close.

Pooks: bags or sacks.

Prickes, butte prick: an instrument for catching butte, that is, flat fish such as halibut and flounder.

Quarter: a dry weight, the equivalent of a sesterne, that is, 8 strikes or bushels .

Quye: a heifer, a young cow before it has had its first calf.

Retting: a process in which fax and hemp were soaked to remove unwanted outer vegetation.

Saltern: salt making site.

Sesterne, sester, sistern: locally, a measure of salt, probably the equivalent of a quarter and, also, a container holding that quantity; possibly of the same derivation as cistern.

Seyne, seane: fishing net designed to hang vertically in the water, the ends being drawn together to catch fish.

Shaft, shafte: handle for tools, pole.

Shelde: possibly a shield to protect salt workers from the heat of the fire.

Skeppe, skep: a wickerwork container and also a measure.

Soos, soes: large wooden containers; large tubs.

Staffes: sticks of wood, rods, bars, poles and the like.

Staies: appliances for holding up or securing in position some part of a structure.

Stale: a handle, especially a long slender handle, for example, the handle of a rake.

Stang: eel spear.

Stint: in this context, a general name for sandpipers, especially the dunlin.

Strike: a denomination of dry measure, locally used as a measure for salt and equal to a bushel. The word was sometimes used for the container which held that amount.

Teld: a cover; a canopy or awning; locally, the a cover for a salt cart.

Tenement: a property holding, usually a house and land.

Tenter: a frame for stretching cloth.

Thistle: thixle; adze.

Trace: a pair of trace; ropes or straps by which the collar of a draught animal is connected to the swingle tree.

Tup: male sheep; ram.

Turfs, turves: clods of peat.

Wether: a male sheep, especially a castrated ram.

Webster: weaver.

Weller: salt weller; a skilled operative who heated brine to extract salt.

Winding sheet: a sheet in which a corpse was wrapped for burial.

Womble: wimble; gimlet; small boring tool.

Monetary Values

It is not possible to reconstruct precisely modern day equivalents for values of money in previous times but economic historians have created a ready-reckoner which has been accepted as a guide. The figures quoted below are taken from Lawrence H Offices and Samuel H Williamson *The Purchasing Power of Money in the United States from 1774 to 2010. Measuring Worth 2009*. The figures for the UK can be found on the web site www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk under the title *The Purchasing Power of the British Pound*. The table below compares the value of money in 1600 with its value in 2008, which is the most recent date for which figures are so far available (3 January 2011). Two estimates are given, one based on average earnings and the other on retail price index. The huge discrepancy between them indicates dramatically the substantial inflation in wages and salaries compared to that of prices.

A comparison of the monetary values of the years 1600 and 2008

1600 Monetary Value	2008 Average Earnings	2008 Retail Price Index
1d	£8.41	£0.61
1s	£101	£7.34
£1	£2,020	£147
£5	£10,000	£734
£10	£20,200	£1,470
£20	£40,400	£2,940
£50	£101,000	£7,340
£100	£202,000	£14,700
£1,000	£2,020,000	£147,000

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