

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ULNAGE AND
SUBSIDY ON WOOLLEN CLOTH BETWEEN 1394 AND
1485, WITH A CASE STUDY OF HAMPSHIRE

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by

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ABSTRACT

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THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ULNAGE AND SUBSIDY
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The purpose of this work has been to examine the ulnage records that have survived between 1394 and 1485. The work identifies the classes of records which are available and evaluates them. Having made a general survey of the records, those for Hampshire have been considered in more detail. The study shows that records survive which give insight into the administration of this early excise duty and into the use that was made of the revenue raised. It identifies uses to which these records may be put. It therefore rejects the general condemnation of the ulnage records which arose from work by Eleanor Carus-Wilson, while accepting her conclusion that some of the later Particular records are of little use. The study of the records, that show who held the office of ulnager and who were the recipients of the money which they collected, are topics which have not been systematically examined before. They cast light on sub-sets of society normally too insignificant to attract attention outside local studies. In addition, an analysis has been made of the people who paid ulnage fees and it has been shown that the woollen cloth trade was dependent on external financing in addition to internal sources of finance.

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Abbreviations and Conventions

cap.	Chapter (of a Statute)
Cal. Close Rolls	Calendar of Close Rolls
Cal. Fine Rolls	Calendar of Fine Rolls
Cal. Pat. Rolls	Calendar of Patent Rolls
dup.	duplicate
Econ. H.R.	Economic History Review
ed.	Editor, editors
Edw.	Edward
Glos	Gloucestershire
Hants	Hampshire
Hen	Henry
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
IOW	Isle of Wight
m	membrane
mm	membranes
n	footnote
no	number
p.	page
para	paragraph
pp.	pages
PRO	Public Record Office
r.	recto
Ric	Richard
ser.	Series
Stat.	Statute or Statutes
Stat. Northampt.	Statute of Northampton 1328
v.	versa
VCH	Victoria County History (see bibliography)
Vol.	Volume, Volumes
WCM	Winchester College Muniments (see bibliography)
WS ii	Survey of Medieval Winchester 2 ii (see bibliography)
yd	yard, yards

TIME

The months of the year are shortened, using the abbreviations prescribed by the PRO.¹ Viz.

January	Jan	July	July
February	Feb	August	Aug
March	Mar	September	Sept
April	Apr	October	Oct
May	May	November	Nov
June	June	December	Dec

The naming of years

Because none of the sources relate to individual calendar years, every year's length comprises parts of two calendar years. These are shown with a slash, thus 1394/5.

When reference is made to a time span of more than twelve months, and the time referred to is a period from one year to another, the years are joined by a hyphen e.g. 1394-5.

¹ *Citation of Documents in the Public Record Office*, PRO General Information 24, (no date)

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Chapter 1 Introduction and Sources

The ulnage records¹ have been a suspect source ever since Eleanora Carus-Wilson wrote of them that

The ulnager ... has woven an intricate web, well-nigh impossible to disentangle; ingeniously cooking his accounts, devising new patterns from old materials, and leaving behind him works of art rather than transcripts of fact.²

Her criticism has shaped mainstream thinking by medieval economic historians for most of this century. It seems reasonable to reconsider the ulnage records to see whether they contain any material of use, and to address the concerns raised by Carus-Wilson. It will be shown that there are other interpretations of the ulnage records, and that they contain much of use to a historian of late medieval England.

This chapter contains an introduction to the ulnage, followed by a consideration of the historiography. It will show that other researchers in the field only share Carus-Wilson's interpretation of the records to a limited extent and that there are a number of writers who have found useful material within the records. The final section of the chapter will review what original material is available and state briefly the type of information that those sources contain.

¹ This word is variously spelt "alnage", "aulnage" and "ulnage". The spelling currently adopted by the PRO is "ulnage" and that spelling will be used throughout this thesis.

² E.M. Carus-Wilson "The Aulnage Accounts: A Criticism" *Econ. H.R. II*, 1 (1929), reprinted in E.M. Carus-Wilson *Medieval Merchant Venturers* (London, 1967), .279-291, p.291.

Introduction to the Ulnage

The term “ulnage” is derived from the old French ‘aulnage’, which meant to measure by the ell. In medieval Latin, the term “ulnagium” was used.³ The term, in English, is loosely used to cover both the measurement of cloth by the official ulnager and the subsidy paid on certain types of woollen cloth. It will be used here to cover both functions, unless it is necessary to distinguish between the two. The first ulnagers were appointed by the king as “weights and measures” officers, appointments which were being made by the thirteenth century. These officials seem originally to have had the function of checking cloth before purchase for royal use, but they came to be employed by merchants to give disinterested witness to the sizes of cloths which they were considering buying or selling. This practice was enshrined in law in the Statute of Northampton (1328), which laid down standards for imported cloth.⁴ Although this legislation was directed at imported cloth, it was extended, in practice, to provide the basis of cloth measurement for home-produced cloth as well.⁵ Once measured, cloths that were satisfactory were to be marked as such, so that potential purchasers would know that the cloth was of true measure. This service was to be carried out without charge upon the merchant who imported the cloth. Faulty cloths were to be forfeit to the Crown. The statute was worded in such a way that it would seem that such cloths could then be valued and sold locally.

It was in 1350-1 that the requirement for cloths to be measured by the king’s ulnager was extended to all cloths for sale whether imported or not.⁶ An Act of Parliament specifically provided for the ulnager to appoint deputies whose actions were his responsibility, but who were also themselves required to uphold the law and were answerable to it. Provision was made for punishing any ulnager who failed to “do his office well and lawfully”. As a further safeguard

³ *Oxford English Dictionary*

⁴ The statute reads as follows “all cloths in such places where they shall be put to land, shall be measured by the King’s ulnagers in the presence of the mayor and bailiffs ... that is to say the length of every cloth of ray, by a line of seven yards, four times measured by the list, and the breadth of every ray cloth six quarters of measure by the yard; and of coloured cloths the length shall be measured by the back, by a line of six yards and a half, four times measured, and the breadth six quarters and an half measured by the yard without defoiling the cloths; and that the mayor ... where such cloths shall come, shall be ready to make proof what time they shall be required by the meter, without taking any thing of the merchants; and cloths which be of the said assise, shall be marked by the mayor ... as well as by the ulnager; and that all the cloths which shall be found defective of the same assise, shall be forfeit to the King, and prised at their true value in the presence of the said mayor ... and to remain with the ulnagers by Indenture between them, to answer to the King of the said cloths so forfeit; and that the mayor ... shall deliver the Indentures of such cloth forfeit, every year into the Exchequer, the morrow after the Feast of St Michael, for to charge the said ulnager; and at the same time shall the ulnager be put to answer at the Exchequer of the said forfeitures.” See: *Stat. Realm* 1, 2 Edw III Stat. Northampt. cap.14. p.260

⁵ These standards were still in operation within England more than 150 years later as the dimensions and methods of measuring were continued through into later statutes.

⁶ *Stat. Realm* 1, 25 Edw III Stat. 3, cap.1. p.314.

the purchaser of cloth had the right to re-measure it, before the sale was made, even if it bore the ulnager's seal. Any cloth which did not meet the legal measure was to be forfeit and delivered to the king's wardrobe. This last provision was different from that of a generation before when the value of seized cloth was to be remitted to the Exchequer. A provision of this act removed the need for the ulnager, or his deputies, to work in the presence of local officials.

Within three years there were complaints that the ulnagers were seizing so many cloths that their actions were causing serious interference with the trade, and it was decided that the law needed to be changed to reduce the number of cloths being seized. Parliament recognised that the king benefited from the receipt of forfeited cloths and proposed that he be recompensed by a subsidy. In 1353 he was granted a subsidy on each woollen cloth for sale.⁷ The basic rate was 4d for a cloth of assise⁸, or 2d for a half cloth. Cloths dyed with scarlet were to be taxed at 6d. These rates remained throughout the life of the ulnage right into the early eighteenth century, when the tax was abolished.⁹ However, it was decreed that the ulnager had no jurisdiction over cloths which were not for sale. Another change brought about by the legislation of 1353 was that in future the ulnager was to measure and mark each cloth, showing its length, so that it could be sold for a fair price. This measurement was no longer to be a free service because the ulnager was to charge the seller $\frac{1}{2}$ d for each cloth of assise and $\frac{1}{4}$ d for smaller cloths that he measured, but nothing for cloths that were less than half a cloth of assise. Thus the principle of a payment for ulnage was established, making a break with the arrangements that had gone before. This legislation established the "subsidy and ulnage" of woollen cloths, and provided the outline of the tax throughout its existence of more than 350 years.

The subsidy component of the charge was the first excise duty in England. Its latter years overlapped the early years of the imposts called excise, but it was kept separate from them.¹⁰ It was typical of excise in that it was based on the existence of goods and not their value. Thus the ulnage was a specific tax, and not *ad valorem* as are customs duties. This is the normal basis for

⁷ *Stat. Realm* 1. 27 Edw III Stat. 1, cap.4. p.330-1.

⁸ This sum was not untypically a day's wage for a skilled craftsman in 1353. Although the fifteenth century saw an increase in average wage rates, the subsidy on cloth still represented a large proportion of a day's wages to a working man, although it was a very small proportion of the value of the cloth that was taxed.

⁹ John Lister, 'The Early Yorkshire Woollen Trade', *Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series*, LXIV (1924), p.xxiv

excise duty in England. Unlike customs duty which relates to goods crossing a frontier, the ulnage applied to all cloths for sale whether they were imported or home-produced; this is a standard feature of an excise duty. Because excise duties are specific, based on the volume of goods, excise officers have to be much concerned with the measurement of the product, so it was appropriate for a weights and measures official to be charged with the collection of England's first excise duty. Successful taxes tend to be copied by other governments, which are always alert to new ways of raising revenue, but the ulnage does not seem to have been widely copied, perhaps because medieval society was not generally ready for this form of taxation. The exception was Catalonia, which had a tax on cloth, certainly by 1363.¹¹

The dilemma of whether to control the dimensions of cloth for sale erupted on several occasions throughout the latter half of the fourteenth century and at intervals during the fifteenth century. At this distance it is difficult to be certain which interests were driving the various pieces of legislation that came onto the statute book. In particular, were the demands that cloth be of a standard size a requirement of the purchasers, or were the demands generated by elements within the cloth industry who saw standardisation as a way of keeping control of the industry and perhaps of driving their competitors out of business? Certainly, the existence of standard widths of cloth makes cutting garments much easier to plan, but unless it can be proved that the demands came from tailors, it seems much more likely that these demands arose from disputes among the producers of or dealers in cloth. In 1373, standard measure for rays and coloured cloths became the law.¹² In 1376-7, the collection point of the tax was defined in that the cloths only became dutiable after they had been fulled.¹³ In addition, in that year, friscware made in Ireland, or in England of Irish wool, was exempted because such cloths were smaller than the ray cloths and coloured cloths of statute measure.¹⁴ The amendments to the law suggest that various pressure groups were at work to protect their own trade sectors which had

¹¹ Manuel Riu "The Woollen Industry in Catalonia in the Later Middle Ages" in *Cloth and Clothing in Medieval Europe: Essays in Memory of Professor E.M. Carrus-Wilson*, ed. N.B. Harte and K.G. Ponting (Pasold Studies in Textile History 2, 1983), p.211. It was known there as the "bolla" and was charged as an excise duty on both home-produced and imported cloths. As with the ulnage, taxed and inspected cloths were sealed with either lead or wax seals. The tax was assessed and collected at specific offices established for the purpose, known as taulas, of which there were twenty-seven scattered throughout Catalonia at the leading places of woollen manufacture.

¹² *Stat. Realm* 1, 47 Edw III cap.1. p.395. Note: rays were striped cloths.

¹³ A considerable body of excise law is taken up with definitions that determine when a product becomes liable to excise duty and when the duty becomes payable.

¹⁴ *Stat. Realm* 1, 50 Edw III cap.7,8, p.398.

of statute measure.¹⁴ The amendments to the law suggest that various pressure groups were at work to protect their own trade sectors which had either been overlooked or deliberately overridden by the interests of another sector.¹⁵ These amendments also draw attention to the fact that many types of cloth were exempt from the ulnage, and act as a reminder that any study of the ulnage is a study of a specialised sector of the cloth trade.

The grievances related to malpractice by vendors are much more straightforward to interpret. The law of 1373¹⁶ required cloths to be of a given length, and cloths that did not conform were liable to forfeit. It was further alleged, a few years later, that vendors were attempting to circumvent this requirement by sewing lengths of cloth together that, in aggregate, would appear to conform with the legal measure. Furthermore it was alleged that they connived with the ulnagers who sealed the cloth in such a way as to make the purchaser think he was buying one standard length of cloth.¹⁷ This was one of the problems of having standard measure for cloth, for people who could not conform to it found ways to market their cloths even if it meant deceiving their customers. Other abuses were complained of, which, if true, would have been a great nuisance to the customers. For example, in 1391 there were complaints in Parliament that Cloths of Guildford were being over-racked. These cloths were said to be made in Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire, although cloths of that name do not occur in the Hampshire ulnage records. Again it is difficult to know whether this was a major abuse, or an attack by one trade sector upon another.¹⁸ The practice was to be controlled by requiring the ulnager to measure the cloth after fulling, rather than before. In 1393/4, kerseys and like cloths were exempted from the full rate of taxation and their vendors were henceforward required to pay subsidy and ulnage in proportion to the sizes of cloth. This gave recognition to the existence of a substantial amount of cloth which was woven to a lesser size than that of the broadcloth although of similar quality.¹⁹

¹⁴ *Stat. Realm* 1, 50 Edw III cap.7,8, p.398.

¹⁵ Legislation of this type is also a typical example of how revenue legislation has been amended over time as anomalies surface and have to be resolved. Such difficulties are often brought to official notice by the complaints of the taxed.

¹⁶ *Stat. Realm* 1, 47 Edw III, cap. 1, p.395

¹⁷ *Stat. Realm* 2, 3 Ric II cap.2, pp.13-4: The complaint was worded thus: [that people] "cause subtilly to be tacked and set together with thread divers pieces of such cloths, and after covin betwixt them and the King's ulnagers, to hid and colour the falsity, do procure the said ulnager to put the seal ordained upon the same cloths, to the intent that the buyers might believe that such cloths so sealed be sufficient cloths."

¹⁸ When a woollen cloth is fulled, it shrinks as the fibres are felted together. In order to restore it to a useful texture, it is then stretched on a rack while it dries. There is an art in knowing how much racking any given cloth can withstand. If it is not racked sufficiently, it will be too thick and stiff. If it is over-racked, thin patches may develop, and the cloth will shrink subsequently, even without its being washed. It is always possible that Cloths of Guildford were not subject to the ulnage, and hence the requirement to measure them after fulling would not apply as it did to cloths which were subject to the ulnage. Of the various complaints about abuses that found their way onto the statutes, none ever related to the cloths of East Anglia and it is tempting to speculate that perhaps the complaints had something to do with their cloth producers trying to impose their standards upon the rest of the industry.

¹⁹ *Stat. Realm* 2, 17 Ric II cap.2, p.88.

Despite the legislation of 1350/1 which made the ulnager responsible for his actions, his returns were submitted to the sheriff, who answered to the Exchequer for the revenue.¹⁹ Medieval sheriffs did not have time to administer the collection of a minor tax on cloth and by the middle of the 1360s, ulnagers were appointed by the king and required to answer to the Exchequer for the tax they had gathered.²⁰ A mixture of directly appointed officials and farmers were appointed in the years from the late 1350s to 1394. 1394 saw a major change. A law was passed in Parliament stating that ulnagers, amongst others were not to hold office for life, and that such offices were to “remain in the king’s hands under the governance of the Treasurer”.²¹ Thus the practice of farming the ulnage, or granting the office for long periods of years, was prohibited.

From 1394 onwards, ulnagers were appointed for each county or major cloth town in England, except for the Duchy of Lancaster which was charged with making its own arrangements. The ulnage for the counties of the Duchy do not appear in the national returns, nor are they mentioned between the years 1394 and 1485, except once in 1394. At the end of the list of appointees in 1394 is an item which states that the Duke of Lancaster, or his chancellor, is responsible for the collection of the ulnage and subsidy.²² The exclusion of the counties of the Duchy will be assumed from this point on and they will not be referred to again, even when terms implying the whole of England are used.

Thus the ulnage started from the needs for impartial measurement, and was regulated by statute. Eventually the punishment of transgressors, by the seizing of offending cloths, became a useful source of profit to the king, and a major problem for importers and as a compromise, Parliament granted the king a subsidy on cloths for sale in 1353. This did not end the debate between those who wanted all cloths to be of standard measure and those who wanted to be free to sell cloths of any size, but it reduced the king’s vested interest in finding cloths that offended against statute measure. In 1394, there was a major overhaul of the system for collecting the subsidy, and the documents used in this study were written from that date and in a form which lasted until 1485.

¹⁹ See E 359/9.

²⁰ See, for example, E 101/344/8 or E 101/687/3.

²¹ *Stat. Realm* 2, 17 Ric II cap.5, p.88

²² *Cal. Fine Rolls XI, 1391-1399*, pp.122-124 1394 July 20

Historiography

As is true of most historical topics, some historians have made original contributions in the field, while others have refined their work and developed it. In the case of the ulnage, there have been original thinkers, who have made the source material more available and many commentators. This section seeks to identify those who have made significant contributions to the development of our understanding of the tax and its use as a source of information about the economic life of fifteenth-century England. In addition, some of the lesser concerns of Carus-Wilson will be addressed.

Probably because of the cautionary note sounded by Carus-Wilson, the ulnage returns have been very little transcribed, and the enrolled items hardly at all, although the writers of the *Victoria County History* used the ulnage records in the early years of the century.²⁴ Some historians have used the lists of names, of which very few have been published. This lack of published transcription has meant less use of a source of information about late-medieval town life than might be expected. Many of the lists have much to offer and their restricted use has left researchers in the period the poorer. It will be shown in chapters 5 and 6 that there are many useful lists of names as well as lists that are not illuminating and some of the uses to which the lists can be put will be illustrated.

The first and major published transcription of lists of names and of ulnage documents was undertaken by John Lister and was published in 1924.²⁵ He transcribed ulnagers' returns for Yorkshire between 1378 and 1478. He transcribed all the documents he found with names of taxpayers listed. In his introduction he remarked that

When, in the early eighties, I came across [the ulnagers' rolls] in the PRO, I almost had presumption enough to consider myself their discoverer, or rather the discoverer of their great value in regard to the history of our early cloth industry. Since the period of my research these Rolls have, however, been utilised to good effect by Dr Maud Sellers and Mr Heaton.

Thus it would appear that forty years appeared between Lister's discovery of the rolls and his publication of the Yorkshire particulars. Even so his was the first systematic transcription to appear in print.

²⁴ It was from the ulnage records that some of the major cloth producing areas of the middle ages were first identified. For examples see VCH Hampshire or Essex.

²⁵ John Lister, "The Early Yorkshire Woollen Trade", *Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series*. LXIV (1924).

Apart from the obvious advantage to Yorkshire historians of having the names available, one benefit of Lister's work is that it provides a yardstick against which to compare the Hampshire returns. Thus it begins to be possible to establish what is regular and what is abnormal. In general, the Yorkshire returns were set out very much in the same way as were the Hampshire ones although there are some variations in presentation. Some of the Yorkshire returns relating to periods before 1400 showed the subsidy and the ulnage paid by each taxpayer, while others were less detailed. At this period, York and the rest of the County had separate ulnagers, as was the case with Winchester and Hampshire. The return for York for the year to 29 September 1395 is particularly valuable because it showed the payments made on each day and thus revealed the pattern of activity throughout the year.²⁶ As with the Hampshire returns from 1467, the returns for the years from 1469 onwards did not list the individual payees. One or two names were given for each town and these were re-enforced with statements such as "and the other men of the Town of Barnsley". There were three returns in this format, and the totals for named towns were different on each return, which suggests that they were based on reality. As with the later Hampshire returns, the number of cloths presented for payment was much reduced in this later period compared with the numbers of cloths taxed in the 1390s.

The only other author who has edited and published lists of ulnage taxpayers is R.A. Pelham who produced three lists of the names of taxpayers in Warwickshire.²⁷ They were taken from the 1397/8 and the 1399/1400 and 1405/6 ulnage particulars. He listed the names of the payers and the number of cloths on which they paid, but did not show the amounts of money that each person paid. He used his work to demonstrate the relative importance of the different towns in the County for the sale of woollen cloths. Subsequently, he looked at the ulnage accounts for Worcestershire and used the ulnage returns to compare the sales of cloth from different towns within the County between 1399 and 1405.²⁸ His use of the returns from around the turn of the fifteenth century to study the internal distribution of the trade is an aspect of their use which can be employed in similar returns for other counties.²⁹

²⁶ Unfortunately none of the Hampshire returns were submitted in this format.

²⁷ R.A. Pelham, "The Cloth Markets of Warwickshire during the later Middle Ages", *Transactions and Proceedings for the years 1945 and 1946 Birmingham Archaeological Society* LXVI, (1950) pp.131-141.

²⁸ R.A. Pelham, "The Earliest Aulnage Accounts For Worcestershire" *Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society for 1952* XXIX New Series) pp.50-52.

²⁹ Like use is made of the Hampshire returns and the results presented in chapters 5 and 6 below.

Authors of various volumes of the Victoria County Histories used the ulnage returns to help them to establish the extent and location of the woollen industry within their respective counties in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They have not printed lists of taxpayers, nor would it have been appropriate for them to have done so, but they have clearly consulted and used those lists. The section on textiles in the Victoria County History for Hampshire was obviously written with reference to the ulnage returns. Some taxpayers were named and reference is made to the towns where the tax was paid. The author of this article, C.H. Vellacott, was not seeking to draw statistics from the returns but found evidence that the taxpayers were people whose names occurred in other contemporary records. For example, in a footnote, it was pointed out that William Touker, Richard Touker and Nicholas Wise, all of Romsey, were returned as aliens in the year 1439-40, and these are all names of men paying the tax on cloth.³⁰ The article also referred to the incident when two of the ulnage seals were destroyed by fire.³¹

R. Pearce Chope's study of the ulnager in Devon³² is in the spirit of studies made for volumes of the Victoria County History. He followed through the history of the ulnage from its earliest references through to its discontinuation in 1724, with particular reference to the records of Devon. These being most prolific for the late-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as is true elsewhere, the main detail is provided for those times and thus can be compared with the detail available for Hampshire. He identified many of the Devon ulnagers, and was able to supply additional detail about some of them. Furthermore, he supplemented his researches in the state records, at the Public Record Office, with civic records from Exeter. His findings were consistent with those of Heaton in Yorkshire, and with the records of Hampshire.

Herbert Heaton, in his account of the Yorkshire woollen industries, used the ulnage returns in his work.³³ From them he was able to show the amounts of tax paid in each area and hence to show the clustering of production within the County. He then used returns to study the national

³⁰ *Victoria County History Hampshire V*, p.482 n.63.

³¹ *Victoria County History Hampshire V*, pp.481-484. References are made therein to documents in the bundles now catalogued in the PRO as E 101/344/10; E 101/344/11; and E 101/344/17. The loss of the seals is referred to again in chapter 4 in the section on seals.

³² R. Pearce Chope, "The Aulnager in Devon", *Transactions of the Devon Association* 44, (1912) pp.568-596. This article is an excellent introduction to the ulnage records, and it includes a succinct summary of the ulnage legislation. Chope has not printed a transcription of the ulnage returns, but has written an interpretation of them. He did not use the Fine Rolls, so his identification of ulnagers and their appointments is less complete than it might have been. He used the records to identify the cloth producing centres in Devon, and has drawn attention to the importance of Barnstaple as the secondary centre after Exeter.

³³ Herbert Heaton, *Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries* (Oxford 1920) pp. 69-71.

distribution of the woollen industry in 1470.³⁴ He worked from the Particular returns; he does not seem to have consulted the Ulnage Rolls. He looked at the records between 1468 and 1478 and used the returns to establish the rank order of importance of the counties of England in the production of woollens. These figures enabled him to estimate that about 40,000 woollen cloths were produced in 1470.³⁵

Heaton's work was followed by H.L. Gray, in an article about woollen production in the fourteenth century that was published in 1924.³⁶ Gray pointed out that Heaton was the first modern person to attempt to make some general quantification of the output of woollens. Gray also drew attention to the calculations of Lord Cromwell who, in 1433, had examined the ulnage returns and found that the subsidy and ulnage for that year amounted to £720 10s 1d. From that figure he had calculated that there must have been an annual production for sale of 38,426 cloths. The revenue received by the Exchequer in 1433 would not have encompassed all the cloths for sale, because the ulnage was farmed at that time. Thus the money paid in would primarily have been the farm fees. Beyond this sum would have been the payments from which the farmers would have taken their expenses and profits, thus Cromwell's figure understated production. Gray also ranked the counties of England for their relative importance in cloth production, and his order, together with that of Heaton will be discussed in Chapter 2.

The next major article about the ulnage records was that by Carus-Wilson³⁷, who made no mention of the work of either Gray or Heaton although she had consulted the Yorkshire returns. She had hoped to analyse a series of rolls and hence to make an analysis of taxpayers. She took the returns between 1467 and 1478 for Bristol, Wiltshire, Somerset and Dorset. During most of the time in question one Richard More was responsible for making returns to the Exchequer.³⁸ She found that More accounted for more or less the same number of cloths each year, or at the same rate for part years. She then compared these results with those for

³⁴ *ibid.*, pp.84-88. Heaton was using the records then catalogued as Exchequer Kings Remembrancer Accounts, which are now catalogued by the Public Record Office as E 101/339 to E 101/347.

³⁵ Since this was the number of cloths that was taxed, and only cloths for sale were taxable, production must have been somewhat higher.

³⁶ H.L. Gray, "The Production and Exportation of English Woollens in the Fourteenth century", *English Historical Review* XXXIX (1924), pp.13-35. Gray used ulnage returns dated from 1353 to 1358 which he said were "bound up with the customs records" and gave their reference as "Customs Roll 7". It has not proved possible to identify this source.

³⁷ E.M. Carus-Wilson, "The Aulnage Accounts: A Criticism" *Econ. H.R.* II, 1, (1929), reprinted in E.M. Carus-Wilson *Medieval Merchant Venturers* (London, 1967), pp.279-291.

³⁸ He was not ulnager, as stated by Carus-Wilson but approver. This means that he appointed the ulnagers and they were answerable to him, and he to the Exchequer. However this detail does not significantly affect Carus-Wilson's case.

Yorkshire over the same time span and found a similar pattern. She was further alarmed to find that More reported no seizures of cloth between 1474 and 1478. When she examined the Wiltshire returns further, she found that Richard More tended to use the same names with the numbers of cloth attributed to them being repeated from year to year. A similar story emerged in Bristol where it was quite apparent that More was not giving a full list of names. He used 21 names for Bristol, whereas she had found another list, from the first year of Richard III's reign, with 40 pages of names of payers. In her article she set out, at some length, her case that the names submitted on the returns could not have been those of the people who paid the ulnage. This article has shaped much of the thinking about the ulnage returns for nearly seventy years, and is therefore of fundamental importance.

Carus-Wilson was justified in her disappointment with the records. The statute of 1465³⁸ which laid the administration of the ulnage to a class of officials known as "keepers of the seals or ulnagers" was quite specific.³⁹ It stated that the keepers of the cloth seals

shall account yearly of the revenues ... duly showing in the same account the number of all the cloths, ... sealed by them, with the names of the owners of the same.⁴⁰

Thus it was reasonable to expect to find, from that date, long lists of taxpayers. As will be shown in chapter 6, the Hampshire returns for 1466-7 met this requirement, but subsequent returns were abbreviated. In a damning criticism of these abbreviated returns, Carus-Wilson wrote that they were "second-hand compilations of doubtful veracity, often abbreviated, distorted, and repeated again and again", and therefore she concluded that they could not be used as a basis for statistics. Instead she used them as "an example of how the medieval official may prove as misleading an authority as the litigant or the chronicler". She pointed out that the misleading character of narratives by chroniclers was well understood by historians, and stated that these ulnage returns were as unreliable. She castigated the ulnager as "no mere machine automatically registering payments; he also was influenced by personal inclinations, love of ease, perhaps, or of gain, or by conventions of his day unknown to us."⁴¹

As evidence of fraudulent practice, Carus-Wilson was very critical of the fact that the ulnage returns were sent in on one roll by Richard More who had charge of the ulnage in many

³⁸ *Stat. Realm* 2, 4 Edw IV cap.1, pp.403-406.

³⁹ These officials were known as "approvers".

⁴⁰ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, 20, 1461-1471, p.156 1465 July 29.

⁴¹ E.M. Carus-Wilson, "The Aulnage Accounts: A Criticism" *Econ. H.R.* II, 1, (1929), reprinted in E.M. Carus-Wilson *Medieval Merchant Adventurers* (London, 1967), pp.290-1.

counties of the south and west of England, and they were written in one hand. She said of them that

At best, therefore, these returns are copies of accounts kept, more or less thoroughly, by local deputies. At worst they are imitations of old accounts or pure invention. Usually they seem to be formal abstracts or summaries of the originals, prepared with no pretence of tedious addition of each individual's true total, and varying in form according to the mood of the ulnager or his clerk.⁴³

Carus-Wilson argued that the returns were so false as to be unusable, "works of art rather than transcripts of fact"⁴⁴. The facts of her article are not in contention, but there are three parts of her argument which will be addressed immediately. These are the handwriting of the returns, the abbreviation of the lists of names and the likelihood that the names do not represent taxpayers.

The first point to be addressed is that the returns for several counties are in one hand-writing. This seems to be an example of practical administration. Because of the size of the area under his administration, More would have needed clerks to work for him. He would not have sent an untidy return to the Exchequer, nor would he have sent his working documents. It was therefore reasonable to put a clerk to work to make a fair copy of the returns which would be sent off to London, and why not employ one man to prepare the whole return? It was standard practice in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to send fair copies of documents when returns had to be rendered to the Exchequer, or presented to other agencies of central government. Similarly, there is nothing particularly unexpected in finding that Richard More employed the same clerk to prepare the returns each year; the man knew the work and could get on with it. Thus the writing of the document does not, in itself, contribute to the argument that the returns were fraudulent.

The second point was that the lists were incomplete as many names had been omitted. This is true, but fraud entails the intention to deceive, and there does not seem to have been such an intention with these returns. Carus-Wilson herself observed that the returns were written in such a way that it is apparent that not all the names were included because phrases such as "et sociis suis" are to be found by some names. A similar formula was found in the Yorkshire returns for the same period. For example the first item in the return for 1471-73 reads "From John Taillour and William Wikes and the other men of the town of Doncaster, for 44½ saleable cloths there sealed during the time aforesaid 16s 8¼d".⁴⁵ There was obviously no intention to

⁴³ E.M. Carus-Wilson, "The Aulnage Accounts: A Criticism" *Econ. H.R.* II, 1, (1929), reprinted in E.M. Carus-Wilson *Medieval Merchant Venturers* (London, 1967), 279-291, p.290

⁴⁴ *ibid.* p.291.

⁴⁵ John Lister, "The Early Yorkshire Woollen Trade", *Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series* LXIV, (1924), p.103.

deceive in a return written in this format, although it did not conform with the requirements of the statute law. The Hampshire returns for the same period were of similar form. What seems likely is that the ulnagers found submitting full lists to be an onerous requirement, although they were submitted for Hampshire in 1466/7⁴⁶. Carus-Wilson found that the returns for Devon and Cornwall in 1467-9 contained 248 names, although later returns substantially reduced this number. It is also likely that the auditors at the Exchequer were not overpleased when long lists of taxpayers were sent to them by each ulnager. The fact that obviously abbreviated lists were accepted, suggests collusion between the ulnagers and the Exchequer. Perhaps, instead of castigating the laxness of the Exchequer officials for accepting abbreviated returns, it would be more appropriate to applaud their ability in keeping the machinery of government functioning well enough to get in the returns at all in the middle of a civil war and the disturbances that accompanied it.

The third criticism made by Carus-Wilson was that the names which were listed were not those of taxpayers. For example, she instanced two men to whom paying ulnage was attributed and she considered they would not have paid ulnage. She pointed out that Richard Burnard and John Parman were merchants buying cloth, probably for export, and they were not clothiers organising its production.⁴⁷ Her inference was that clothiers, not merchants, would have financed cloth production and therefore been the people to present cloths to the ulnagers and account for the tax. She does not argue that the names are fictitious, merely that they are unlikely to be names of taxpayers. It will be shown in Chapters 5 and 6 that cloths were financed by a far wider circle of people than clothiers. Therefore this argument does not stand. It is unlikely that Burnard and Parman paid tax on the 2085 cloths which were attributed to them, but there is no reason to think that they did not present cloths for payment.

In summary, what can be said of Carus-Wilson's article is that she drew attention to the fact that many of the lists of names in most of the returns which exist for the 1460s and 1470s are incomplete. Unfortunately, the vehemence of her castigation of those returns has led the ulnage returns to be widely regarded as valueless, or at best to contain an incomplete record and, hence, the information which they contain to be ignored.⁴⁸ There is much of worth within the records, although they cannot be used to

⁴⁶ The returns from the 1460s and 1470s are the subject of chapter 6 and will be discussed there.

⁴⁷ E.M. Carus-Wilson, "The Aulnage Accounts: A Criticism" *Econ. H.R. Ser. II*, 1, (1929), reprinted in E.M. Carus-Wilson *Medieval Merchant Adventurers* (London, 1967), pp.285.

⁴⁸ For example, Richard Holt said "even allowing that these returns are generally reckoned to be inaccurate in under-estimating numbers of cloths". Richard Holt, 'Gloucester in the century after the Black Death 141-159', Richard Holt and Gervase Rosser, eds., *The Medieval Town a Reader in English Urban History 1200-1500*, (London, 1990), p.148. or see Vanessa Harding who wrote "Unfortunately, E.M. Carus-Wilson, more than fifty years ago, showed how untrustworthy some at least of these lists, and hence the statistics derived from them, actually are." Vanessa A. Harding, "Some Documentary Sources for the Import and Distribution of Foreign Textiles in Later Medieval England", *Textile History* 18 (2), 205-18, (1987) p.205. Finally there is Bridbury's summary of the regard in which they were held as follows "But in 1929 Professor Carus-Wilson showed that the accounts of ulnage payment that were returned to the Exchequer could be misleading and spurious: misleading because those who presented cloth for sealing by the king's ulnager and whose names appeared in his accounts, were not necessarily those who made cloth or had it made; and spurious because, in the period 1465-78 the accounts were usually nothing but fabrications conducted by dishonest or feckless ulnagers from previous returns. So shattering was the effect of this exposure of the shifts to which fifteenth-century ulnagers could resort, that the work of their fourteenth-century predecessors

for a period of no more than fifteen years do not contain the details which were required by Statute does not make the entire collection of ulnage records worthless. Even Carus-Wilson used them when she wrote the chapter on cloth for the *Victoria County History of Wiltshire*.⁴⁵ She used the Ulnage Rolls to see what amounts of money were accounted for at the Exchequer annually, and based her estimate of long term changes in the volume of trade in Wiltshire upon the figures that she found there.

It was many years after the publication of this condemnatory article by Carus Wilson before work on the ulnage made its way into print, and the major contribution was made by A.R. Bridbury, who also worked upon the Wiltshire ulnage returns. He was more sanguine about the returns than Carus-Wilson had been.⁴⁶ While taking note of Carus-Wilson's strictures, his judgement was that the "flagrant venality of a small group of ulnagers" in the 1460s and 1470s should not be allowed to detract from those records which were not tainted. In particular he singled out the records from the 1390s and records from the 1460s other than those of Richard More as worthy of consideration. He has warned that these returns need to be used with understanding lest they mislead the unwary, but he has concluded that time spent on the ulnage records is worthwhile because of their importance in showing where the English cloth industry was located.

Bridbury refuted the conclusions commonly drawn from Carus-Wilson's work with an analysis based largely on his work on the Wiltshire records.⁴⁷ In a detailed description of the earlier records, of which seven survive for Wiltshire between 1394 and 1415, he compared the ulnage returns with contemporary civic records of Salisbury, wherein lay the heart of the industry in the County at that time. He found that

Men who were important in the ulnage returns were important also in the civic life of Salisbury. As they grew old their children sometimes took their places in the cloth industry, and hence in the returns, whilst they themselves might continue to be active in the service of the town. And when they died, if death overtook them before retirement, their names disappeared from subsequent returns as promptly as they did from subsequent records of council meetings and official business.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ E.M. Carus-Wilson, "The Woollen Industry before 1550", *Victoria County History, Wiltshire*, 4, 1959, p.124.

⁴⁶ A.R. Bridbury, *Medieval English Clothmaking* (London, 1982) especially pp.47-61.

⁴⁷ A.R. Bridbury, *Economic Growth England in the Later Middle Ages* (Brighton, 1975), p.33-4.

⁴⁸ Bridbury quoted Salisbury Corporation Records: Ledger A: Domesday Books of wills proven and deeds witnessed in the Court of the Sub-Dean of Sarum, *passim*. He particularly noted citizens such as Thomas Eyre, John Nedler, William Doudyng,

Bridbury pointed out that the Wiltshire returns from this earlier period were anything but copies from one year to another, but appeared to be true compilations of returns. He also drew attention to Pelham's transcriptions of the Warwickshire particular returns, which do not exhibit any of the shortcomings of the later west country returns. Bridbury further stated that other particular returns have survived from the 1390s and the 1400s which did not suffer from the faults exhibited by More's returns. He had examined returns from the counties of Essex, Suffolk, and Somerset, and found them satisfactory. He added the comment that ulnagers from this period in other important clothmaking counties were "innocent of the subterfuges that destroyed the value of later records and the reputation of the whole class".⁵² Thus he vouched for the value of these earlier records.

There are two other recent studies which have drawn on the ulnage records, namely those of Vanessa Harding and Derek Keene. Vanessa Harding studied the ulnage accounts as part of a larger study of London trade.⁵³ She has expressed forcefully the point of view that it is regrettable that the whole class of ulnage accounts have been largely ignored because of problems with west country returns in the later fifteenth century and has concluded that they may well contain more of interest and value than is generally appreciated. Derek Keene consulted two of the ulnage particular returns in his monumental study of Winchester,⁵⁴ namely those of 1394-5 and 1398-9. Keene said of them that "they cannot be dismissed as fictitious compilations, which some of the fifteenth-century compilations certainly were." He noted that the "names listed are well-attested in other contemporary sources". These Hampshire names and their occurrence in other documents is discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 below.

In summary this section has shown that most of the work carried out on the ulnage records has been rooted in local records and been by historians working on particular counties. Two authors have published lists of ulnage payers, and the others have clearly referred to them. The records were used in the first quarter of the century as a basis for a study of the cloth trade, and then Carus Wilson damned them so authoritatively that they were little used for many years.

cannot be made in other leading cloth cities for lack of parallel civic and ulnage records. See A.R. Bridbury *Economic Growth England in the Later Middle Ages* (Brighton, 1975) p.33 n.3.

⁵² A.R. Bridbury *Economic Growth England in the Later Middle Ages* (Brighton, 1975) p.33 n.3. He gave the following references for these records: Essex: E 101/342/9, 13, 14, 16; Suffolk: E 101/342/8, 10; Bristol and Somerset: E 101/339/2, 4; E 101/343/28, 30; E 101/344/3; Wiltshire: E 101/345/2, 4.

⁵³ Vanessa Harding, "Some Documentary Sources for the Import and Distribution of Foreign Textiles in Later Medieval England" *Textile History* 18 (2) (1987) pp.205-218.

⁵⁴ Derek Keene, *Survey of Medieval Winchester* part I [Winchester Studies 2] (Oxford, 1985) p.309.

However, A.R. Bridbury in particular, and others after him, have re-assessed their worth and have used some of the documents. They regard them as providing useful additions to the knowledge of the cloth industry of their time. The need to use them with discretion is stressed. But is not this true of all source documents?

Sources

Very little locally available material relating directly to the ulnage has been identified, and none for Hampshire. The source material for a study of the ulnage is to be found primarily in the state archives. The ulnage records comprise two Ulnage Rolls, augmented by particular accounts and other associated documents. No calendars or transcripts are available for this material. Additional material relating to the administration of the ulnage has been enrolled in the Patent Rolls, the Fine Rolls and the Close Rolls. When a study of individuals named in the national records is undertaken, their names can often be identified in local material.

It was the returns from the local administrators of the ulnage that were enrolled in the Ulnage Rolls. The Ulnage Rolls and their accompanying particular accounts provide the most detailed material for the study of the ulnage. These two Ulnage Rolls cover the years from 1394 to 1485, which means that there is a series of records lasting for 91 years showing in detail the administration of this minor tax in late medieval England. The Ulnage Rolls are augmented by Particular returns. These were the detailed submissions of the ulnagers in some of which the names of taxpayers can be found. Not all the Particular returns have survived, so they resemble a series of snapshots rather than a structured corpus of material. The farmers of the ulnage were not required to submit detailed returns showing who had paid the tax, and the separate documents which they returned to the Exchequer mostly contain the text of the items which were enrolled.⁵² The documents which relate to Hampshire are described in Appendix 1.

The sole use of the Fine Rolls in the administration of the ulnage was to record appointments to office and most appointments of office to administer the ulnage were enrolled in therein. In each volume, the first appointment of an ulnager is set out at length showing the terms of appointment. Subsequent entries are then abbreviated with reference to the first item. The Fine Rolls have been searched and every appointment of ulnager between 1394 and 1485 has been extracted for this thesis. The appointments have been sorted into counties so the outline of the

⁵² The Ulnage Rolls and the Hampshire particular returns are described in more detail in Appendix 1.

administration of each county has been determined. Furthermore it has been possible to observe the change in wording of appointments over the 91 years and thus to see how the administration developed. The first of these appointments took place in July 1394, when ulnagers were appointed for the whole country. On no future occasion was such a comprehensive set of appointments made at any one time. This wholesale appointment of ulnagers, together with the fact that the Ulnage Rolls start from the same date, is the major justification for taking the study of the ulnage from 1394.⁵⁶

The primary use of the Patent Rolls in connection with the ulnage was to enrol grants of money made by the king. They were also the place where directions about other administrative matters in connection with the ulnage were enrolled. For example, in the years between 1400 and 1402 there were five entries in which commissioners were appointed to enquire into possible or actual wrong-doing in connection with the ulnage.⁵⁷ Occasionally, there were disputes about who should hold office, and the outcome of some of these was enrolled in the Patent Rolls.⁵⁸ Finally, a few entries relate to ulnagers, or their executors, who were pardoned their debts or other transgressions arising from their time in office.⁵⁹ Before 1394 grants of office of ulnager had been enrolled on the Patent Rolls, but this practice ceased then, with a few exceptions, which may have been enrolled in the Patent Rolls in error.⁶⁰ Thus the Patent Rolls are useful for seeing what transgressions were committed by the ulnagers, and for seeing how the income was used by the Crown.

⁵⁶ The first appointment was that of William Elys of Canterbury as ulnager for Kent. It is set out in full in the Calendar of Fine Rolls and acts as a template for the other appointments of that year. After Elys's appointment there follows a long list of ulnagers appointed for other places on "like" terms. See *Cal. Fine Rolls XI, 1391-1399*, pp.122-4 1394 July 20.

⁵⁷ *Cal. Pat. Rolls Hen IV 1399-1401*, p.348 1400 August 24, p.413 1400 November 4, p.516-7 1401 April 29, p.520 1401 July 5; *Cal. Pat. Rolls Hen IV 1401-1405*, p.70 1402 March 1. These are discussed on pp.92-3.

⁵⁸ See *Cal. Pat. Rolls Hen VI 1422-1429*, p.459-60 1428 February 4; *Cal. Pat. Rolls Hen VI 1441-1446* p.97-8 1442 July 15. See p.80

⁵⁹ See *Cal. Pat. Rolls Hen VI 1452-1461*, p.249 1455 August 29, p.631 1460 November 11, *Cal. Pat. Rolls Edw IV 1461-1467*, p.461-2 1465 September 23, p.448 1466 February 4; *Cal. Pat. Rolls Edw IV, Hen VI 1467-1477*, p.282 1471 November 9; *Cal. Pat. Rolls Edw IV, Edw V, Ric III 1476-1485*, p.234 1481 January 1; p.262 1482 February 10. These are discussed on pp.93-4.

⁶⁰ *Cal. Pat. Rolls Ric II 1396-1399*, p.42 1396 December 13. William Boneface of Chesterton was appointed king's ulnager for Cambridge. The appointment was unusual because it instructed the sheriff of the County and others to "compel all people deputed by the said William to execute the office in his stead." This was not a normal clause for the appointment of ulnager, nor were the other ulnagers called "king's ulnager" so this may not have been an appointment of an official to collect the subsidy. There were three late appointments as ulnager enrolled in the Patent Rolls. William Sterlyng was appointed "of the subsidy and ulnage of cloths" for Surrey and Sussex in 1462 September 5. In 1472 March 26 Robert Plomer was appointed as surveyor of king's castles, lordships, manors and lands and the farms of ulnage and receiver of the same for fees as agreed for the counties of Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk and Norwich. Lord John Neville was appointed ulnager for Yorkshire in 1461 July 18. Only Neville had other appointments as ulnager recorded in the Fine Rolls.

The items which relate to the ulnage in the Close Rolls record attachments of the revenue derived from the ulnage and they are very specific. They state who the beneficiaries were and from which county's ulnage they were to be paid. Thus, with additional material from the Patent Rolls, it is possible to follow the disbursement of much of the income from the ulnage. There were some entries which dealt with malpractice by ulnagers, or allegedly fraudulent sales of cloth, but this type of entry ceased after 1411. The Close Rolls were not used to enroll appointments.

The existence of several series of documents relating to a theme enables them to be examined for consistency. Although each may be internally consistent, it is necessary to consider whether they relate to each other and how complete they are. In particular, can the Fine Rolls be used as a basis for studying the appointment of officials or are its records seriously flawed in some way? The Ulnage Rolls contain the records of returns rendered by the ulnagers and are therefore likely to be the most complete record of serving officials. They can therefore be taken as the yardstick against which other records could be measured. The Fine Rolls were tested against the Ulnage Rolls. A sample of 65 enrolled items selected from the two Ulnage Rolls was examined, and there was a 91% match of names. That is, 59 of the 65 men whose names were on the Ulnage Rolls were the names that could be expected from the data in the Fine Rolls.⁶¹ The mismatch arises either because men to whom office has been granted and although their grants have been enrolled, they have not taken up their office, or because men to whom office has been granted have not had their grants enrolled. The match between the Fine Rolls and the Ulnage Rolls is close enough to allow the Fine Rolls to be used with confidence as a source document for the names of office holders. A complete match does not exist, but the match is sufficiently accurate to form a basis from which conclusions may be drawn.

In order to determine the amount of revenue the directly-employed ulnagers collected, it would be necessary to extract the details from the two Ulnage Rolls. They have not been calendared, and this task was not attempted. Therefore the money collected when there were directly employed ulnagers has not been ascertained. The position when the ulnage was farmed is different. The amounts of farm were not included on the Ulnage Rolls, but the amount of farm was stated as part of the grant of farm, so they are known from published sources. Because the Fine Rolls have been found to be reasonably complete, it is justifiable to calculate the amount of revenue that was due by taking the size of each farm and adding them up. This gives a measure of the income during the years when the ulnage was farmed but not at other times. It seems

⁶¹ The selection was made by taking the last entry on the front of each membrane of the Ulnage Roll. This gave a random selection of places and an even spread across time. These names were checked to see if they were the names that could have been expected to make the returns if the Fine Rolls were accurate and complete. Two items contained trivial discrepancies between the Ulnage Rolls and the Fine Rolls but they do not affect the validity of the Fine Rolls. In addition, six men, whose appointments were not enrolled in the Fine Rolls, had made returns which were recorded in the Ulnage Rolls. Four of these six 'missing' men came from the period 1396/7.

likely that the farms were paid in full, without discount. Certainly this seems to have been the case in Hampshire. Therefore it is possible to make a realistic estimate of the size of income which the crown expected to receive from the ulnage by adding up the amount expected from each farm. The income from the ulnage and the uses to which it was put, are discussed in chapter 2.

Thus there are four sources of material in the Public Record Office which between them can be used to build up a picture of the administration of the ulnage. They exhibit internal consistency, and they can be cross-referred in such a way as to give confidence in them as a reasonably accurate body of source material. There are sufficient records of the ulnage to enable a detailed study to be made of the administration of the ulnage. They provide an opportunity to examine the administration of an excise duty in fifteenth-century England. The lack of sufficient itemised returns prevents a detailed longitudinal study of taxpayers being made, nor does their absence permit a minute study of the variations in manufacturing output. Nonetheless there is sufficient detail to enable long term trends to be considered and they allow the distribution of the industry to be observed. They also provide enough information about the administrators to enable a study to be made of the people involved in administering the tax, and the records show what was done with the money once collected. Finally, there are some particular returns with names of taxpayers. From these sources some conclusions can be drawn about the organisation of the woollen cloth trade.

Chapter 2 The Revenue

This chapter is concerned with the revenue of the ulnage. In the first part of the chapter, the income from the subsidy and ulnage will be examined. Initially the outline structure of the administration will be considered. Then attention will be paid to the amount of money which the ulnage provided for the crown, and some attempt made to consider whether the figures are compatible with other contemporary sources. An examination will be made of which parts of the country were the sources of the revenue, and what changes are apparent over time. This will be followed by a detailed study of the revenue from Hampshire. In the second part of the chapter, the evidence for the use that was made of the revenue will be examined. It will be shown that the money was mostly used by the king for payments to members of his household staff.

Income

The most conspicuous fact about the ulnage and subsidy on cloth is what a small tax it was. Nonetheless it was deemed useful to hard pressed royal purse-keepers and a continuing effort was made to collect the money. It rarely produced more than £800 in any year between 1394 and 1485, and often the annual income was nearer £700. This figure can be compared with the annual average of £24,000 received from the customs during the 1460s, as it had been in Henry VI's reign.¹ To a modern mind, the fact that no effort was ever made to increase the rates of duty, or extend the range of cloths included in the tax net, is quite extraordinary. It is as though an equilibrium had been achieved, which would continue, providing that nothing happened to disturb it. Had a push been made to increase or extend the tax, parliament might have withdrawn it altogether. It may also have achieved public acceptance because of the ulnage element, or the "weights and measures" aspect, of the duties of the ulnagers.

Without making detailed extracts from the Ulnage Rolls, there is no way that the national income from the ulnage can be determined in those years when the ulnage was collected by directly employed ulnagers. However the ulnage was farmed for about three quarters of the years under review² and the size of the farm fees are shown in the Close Rolls. Therefore it is

¹ Charles Ross, *Edward IV* (London, 1974) p.373.

² Appendix 21 gives a resume of which type of employment of ulnager was common at which times.

possible to make reasonable estimates of the income for most of the years in question and it has been demonstrated in chapter 1 that the enrolments in the Fine Rolls are a good source of information about the holders of the farms, and by inference, the contracted amounts of farm fees are the amounts paid. Farming became commonplace from 1403. For those years when farming was the predominant method of collecting the ulnage, there were no years when the total income from farms was below £600, and most often the figure was above £700. Thus the Exchequer could usually expect revenue in the region of £700 per annum from this subsidy. As was stated in Chapter 1, Lord Cromwell calculated the income from the ulnage in 1433 as £720 10s 1d, a sum which was the equivalent of a production for the market of 38,426 cloths.”³ While considering the small size of the ulnage, it is worth noting that the average size of farm was slightly in excess of £32.⁴

The Administrative Framework

Changes in the size of farms must be taken as indicators of long term trends, because farms were let for several years at a time, which would have meant that the Exchequer would not have been affected by short term changes in levels of production. There were changes but a there was a considerable degree of continuity in the farms of individual counties over the years. This demonstrates clearly that the ulnage returns were not sensitive to variations in trade, except at the macro level, and cannot be used, as are the Customs figures, to show detailed fluctuations in trade patterns.

Nonetheless, there were sufficient variations in the farms of the ulnage to make it worth following them through and discussing possible reasons for changes. Until 1394, farming the ulnage had been commonplace. Then the work was undertaken by men who were directly answerable to the Exchequer, although a number of farms were let in 1399 by Richard II. These farmers did not last long as Henry IV reverted to directly employed officials. Farming was re-established as the normal way of administering the tax from 1403, and most of the tax was then farmed until 1464-5, when the administration of the ulnage passed to Approvers. Farming was re-introduced in 1477/8.

³ H.L. Gray, “The Production and Exportation of English Woollens in the Fourteenth century”, *English Historical Review* XXXIX, (1924) p.13

⁴ This figure was derived by taking the farm for each county for each year in which farm was payable, finding the sum of those figures, and then calculating the arithmetic mean, i.e. a weighed average. It is made of a few counties which were substantially above the average, and many which were below.

Farming had been completely abandoned in 1394. On no future occasion was so complete a break with the past achieved,⁵ and some farms, at least, can be found in all the years from 1398.⁶ In 1399, twelve farmers were appointed, in June, by Richard II. These farms had very high rents so probably arose from an urgent need for funds by the king.⁷ None of these specific appointments of Richard was renewed by the incoming Henry IV, although some previous ulnagers were re-appointed by Henry. This may be coincidence, but it lends credence to the suggestion that there was an overtly political element in the appointments made by Richard II in June and July 1399.

There was a tendency for the income from farms to rise between 1403 and 1456, which suggests an overall improvement in the English cloth trade in the first half of the fifteenth century. In the 1450s the farm rents reached heights in excess of £800 for the whole country. However, the market seemed unable to sustain farms totalling £800, and the income fell away. The drop in farm income came about partly because the farms were let at lower sums, and partly because grants of office of types other than farms were made. In 1479 and 1480 when farming had been restored, the farm rents totalled more than £800 which was equal to the peak of the 1450s, but then dropped by about £100. This could be because the fees were set too high, or there could have been a downturn in trade. A note of caution is needed, because the enrolments of grant seem to be incomplete for the 1480s and it would be unwise to draw conclusions about the volume of trade on that evidence. It seems likely that some of the farm fees may have been set too high when farming was re-introduced. One example that the new fee may have been set too high can be seen in Bristol. In 1459 the farm for the ulnage of Bristol had been £65 and when farming was re-introduced in 1478 the fee was £64. In 1483, the farm plummeted to £32 1s 8d,⁸ which probably indicated a major reduction in output.

Such then is an outline of the changes in the basic administrative methods used for collecting the ulnage in much of the fifteenth century. Except where extracts have been made of material in

⁵ In general, the farmers seem to have been summarily dispossessed, but one, Thomas de Brounefle, was compensated. He had been granted the farm of the ulnage of York, Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmoreland at a rent of £40. This fee had been reduced to £20, as a way of making him a grant of £20, and he was compensated for the loss of this income. *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Ric II 1391-1396*, p.528 1394 Nov 25.

⁶ The first reversion to farming was made in 1398 when John Arnold of Ipswich was appointed farmer of Suffolk at a rent of £54. *Cal. Fine Rolls XI, 1391-1399*, p.255 1398 Apr 28.

⁷ The annual farm fee was to be paid in two instalments, at Michaelmas and Easter. Thus ulnage let to farm in June or July would, in theory produce income for the king in the autumn.

⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, pp.219-20 1459 August 26; *XXI, 1471-1485*, p.155 1478 June 5, p.258 1483 May 19.

the Ulnage Rolls, or their associated particular returns, the only figures available are those for the years in which the ulnage was farmed. There are sufficient of these to allow much useful information to be gleaned. The brief overview of the movement of these fees provided above will act as a reference point against which a more detailed survey can be undertaken.

Economic Considerations

Before considering in detail the changes in the income from the ulnage, the external factors that may have affected production levels need to be considered. The re-organisation of the ulnage administration in 1394 took place against a background of a buoyant cloth trade. Richard II was by then an adult and experienced king, who was to lose his throne some five years hence. The fifteenth century opened with Henry IV establishing himself on the throne. His son, Henry V, succeeded him and then died prematurely, leaving an infant to succeed him, and the country to suffer the difficulties of rule by an uneasy alliance of nobles. Henry VI's own rule was subject to various limitations, some of which directly affected the ulnage, as will be shown later. In the 1450s he went mad, and in 1461 was replaced by Edward IV after a successful rebellion. Edward's reign was interrupted around 1470 by insurgency, although he regained the throne in 1471. Such then was the political background against which the ulnage was being collected.

Whatever the impact of the political factors on the buoyancy of the cloth trade, it was clearly bound up with contemporary economic factors. It is generally agreed by historians of the period that there was a 'great depression' in the middle of the fifteenth century, although the decades in which this is deemed to have had effect vary according to the material studied. That said, all the writers on the subject include the 1450s and 1460s in the depression period. There is evidence of a time lapse where ulnage farm fees were concerned. They continued to rise in the early 1450s, presumably based on the successful years of the 1440s, and then dropped sharply when farmers realised that the profitability of their farms was less than they had hoped.

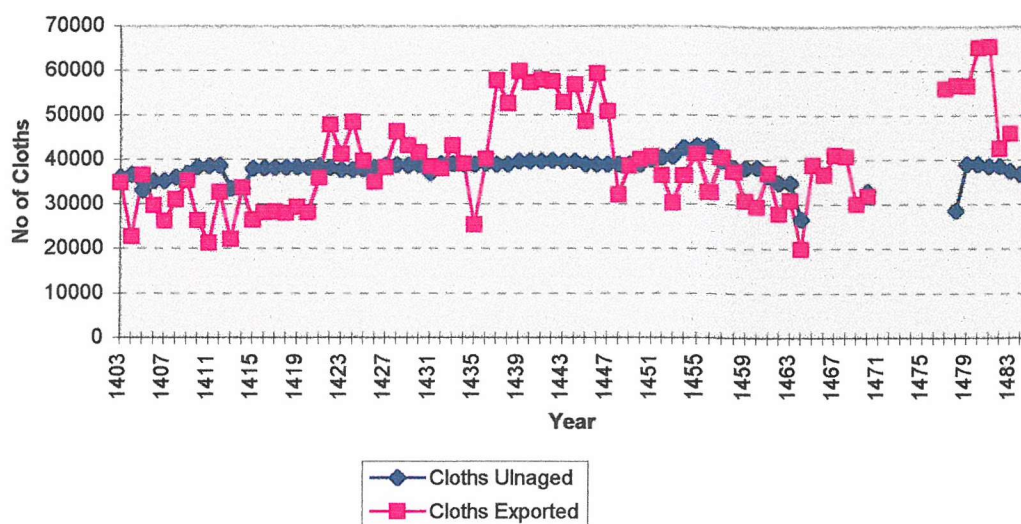
This drop in ulnage income represents a significant retrenchment in the cloth industry. What caused the drop in income? There were long-running disputes with Duke Philip of Burgundy,⁹ who banned the imports of English cloth at various times in the thirty years from the late 1420s as one of the options available to him to make his displeasure apparent. These bans were not wholly effective, but they certainly did nothing to improve England's export trade in cloth. The end of the war with France and the loss of Gascony in 1453 closed another market, until a

⁹ John H.A. Munro, *Wool, Cloth and Gold, the Struggle for Bullion in Anglo-Burgundian Trade 1340-1478* (Toronto, 1972) pp.164-6.

peace treaty was signed with France in 1475. As if disputes with two of the country's trading partners were not enough, there was conflict with the Hanseatic League which reduced trade in a third sphere. This dispute was settled by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1474. It is noticeable that farm fees increased around 1480, which suggests that peace was beneficial to the cloth trade.

The other possible cause of wide economic depression was shortage of bullion. The 'bullionists' argue that trade in general was stultified by a shortage of coin. One of the measures taken to counter this problem, was a re-coinage instigated by Edward IV in 1465. Unfortunately, the re-coinage took place at the start of a period when the ulnage was not farmed, so it is not possible to see what effect this had on farm fees. There were, however, complaints about the drop in ulnage income in the late 1460s and 1470s.

Another possible way to test the validity of the ulnage figures would be to compare them with the figures for the exports of broadcloths. In an ideal world, the two sets of figures should be expected to move in the same general direction. The ulnage, when farmed, does not represent all the cloths which were produced, because the farmers collected additional money from which they paid their expenses and drew their profits. The level of profitability is an unknown figure and was unlikely to be static. Also, the ulnage farms were not a sensitive indicator of the state of trade, but were probably based on the state of the market in the years just passed. Table 2-1 shows, as a graph, the relative number of cloths exported, compared with the number on which ulnage farm fees were paid. Only those years when substantial numbers of counties were farmed have been included.



Source: Ulnage figures: *Calendar of Fine Rolls*

Customs figures: A.R. Bridbury *Medieval English Clothmaking* (London, 1982) Appendix F

Table 2-1 Comparison of Ulnage and Export Figures

The customs figures themselves appear to fall into five phases, an early one up to 1420 with exports of cloths around the 30,000 mark, a period of increased trade around the 40,000 mark which lasted until about 1435. The next fifteen years, until about 1459, must later have been seen as the golden age because exports approached 60,000 cloths a year. After 1450 they dropped to around 35,000 which was better than the first twenty years of the century but worse than the succeeding thirty years. The 1450s and 1460s were the years when the great depression was deemed to be at its worst and relative to the previous fifteen years exports dropped substantially. Finally there was an apparently prosperous period from the late 1470s. However caution should be exercised in the latter period, as a number of years have been omitted from the chart because the figures are not available. The apparent fluctuations may be the result of incomplete data and not of disturbed trade figures, although Margaret Bonney in her study of the export figures observed that, by the 1470s, there was a recovery and the numbers of cloths being exported had risen in volume.¹⁰

¹⁰ Margaret Bonney, "The English Medieval Wool And Cloth Trade: New Approaches For The Local Historian" *The Local Historian* 22, no 1 (1992) pp.18-41.

It would be reasonable to expect the number of cloths presented for ulnage to be above the number that were exported, because some cloths would have been sold on the home market. The periods when exports of cloth ran well above the income from the ulnage probably indicate the period when farming the ulnage was particularly profitable, because a smaller proportion of ulnage income had been remitted to the Exchequer in farm fees. On this assumption, the first twenty years of the fifteenth century were not particularly profitable nor were those of the 1450s and early 1460s. The export figures had been buoyant in the 1440s and were well in excess of the number of cloths on which farm fees were paid to the Exchequer. These must have been the 'golden years' for some of the ulnagers at least. The farm rents taken out in the early 1450s probably reflected the state of the market in the late 1440s, by which time the figures were out of date and the 'time-lapse effect' can be seen in the way the farm fees rose in the early 1450s, only to fall away again quite quickly as it became apparent that these increases no longer reflected the state of the market. The 1450s, 1460s and perhaps the early 1470s saw a sharp drop in the number of exported cloths from the high figures of the 1440s, and by the mid-1460s the ulnage farmer's profit margins were much lower than they had been. Edward IV was similarly unlucky, in that his perception and that of the men around him had probably been formed by the successful years of the 1440s. At some time in the late 1470s there was an increase in the numbers of cloths exported, back to figures comparable with those of the 1440s, and coincidentally this increase coincided with the return to farming the ulnage. Thus whatever dishonesty can be laid at the doors of the approvers, it must be recognised that their period in office generally coincided with a depressed time for the broadcloth industry.

Despite the fluctuations in production and export of woollen cloths, and periodic set-backs in the industry, there was still a large volume of international trade in cloth. Dyer¹¹ has drawn attention to the fact that in the fifteenth century, when the overall quantity of commerce tended to decline, there was, nevertheless, a high level of English merchant activity. He attributed this paradox to the fact that the English merchants controlled a considerable proportion of the export trade, in particular the members of the Merchant Venturers' company who were exporting much cloth. He said that the high point of merchant prosperity was 1400 which was a boom year which was followed by a decline in merchant wealth in the fifteenth century and this decline was matched by a drop in urban rents. This pattern can be seen in Winchester where rents were collapsing in the 1420s and 1430s, and where the production of woollen cloths had dropped substantially by the 1440s. It will be shown later that the largest merchants in

¹¹ Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1990) p.194.

Hampshire in the 1460s were dealing in many fewer cloths than had their predecessors of the 1390s. However it is clear that there were local factors at work in Hampshire. Production fell significantly in Winchester and this decline was not offset by the modest rise in production elsewhere in the County.¹² This change in production will be considered in detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

The recession affected London in the mid 1440s and had its repercussions in the provinces. Nightingale quotes Colchester as one town which was hit by recession in the 1450s, from which it did not recover for the rest of the fifteenth century,¹³ so Winchester was not the only cloth town to suffer severe decline. She points out that, as recession progressively affected the key towns of the realm, their hinterlands suffered from the lack of credit which the central towns could grant for commercial activity. If she is correct, it is apparent that the Hampshire cloth industry was atypical, because the volume of cloths presented to the ulnager rose slightly for the County, while being drastically reduced in Winchester.

Comparative Importance of Counties and the Place of Towns

One of the uses of the ulnage records is that they provide figures which indicate the scale of broadcloth production of individual counties. Both H.L. Gray and Herbert Heaton used ulnage figures to rank the counties in order of importance. Gray particularly studied the figures from the earliest returns of the 1350s and 1390s¹⁴, from which he produced two separate lists. Heaton used figures from the 1460s¹⁵ to list the counties in order, and these three lists can be compared with my own list formed from the averages for the period between 1394 and 1485.¹⁶ There are, of course, problems with comparing these four lists which are shown in Appendix 2. For example, Gray combined the figures for Wiltshire and Hampshire in the 1350s which has the effect of making Hampshire appear to be the premier cloth producing county in England in

¹² It would be interesting, but not possible here, to study the degree to which the collapse of Winchester's cloth trade could be attributed to the bullion shortage and the inability of the traders of the City to give extended credit. Pamela Nightingale wrote that from the 1440s it was capital rather than enterprise that established men as grocers. Perhaps men with sufficient capital behind them did not see Winchester as a profitable place in which to invest. Pamela Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community, The Grocers' Company and the Politics and Trade of London 1000-1485* (London, 1995).p.477.

¹³ Pamela Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community, The Grocers' Company and the Politics and Trade of London 1000-1485* (London, 1995) p.482.

¹⁴ H.L. Gray, "The Production and Exportation of English Woollens in the Fourteenth century", *English Historical Review*, XXXIX, (1924), p.34.

¹⁵ Herbert Heaton, *Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries*, (Oxford, 1920) p.85.

¹⁶ The four lists will be referred to as Gray 1350s, Gray 1390s, Heaton and Merrick. The Merrick list is an average of the figures from 1394 to 1485.

that decade. This conclusion is at variance with the results from the three later studies and seems somewhat unlikely. It is very difficult to establish an accurate ranking for the counties of East Anglia because of the continuous, but changing, grouped administration. Bridbury has suggested that Gray ignored “the leading contribution of Norwich to cloth production” and that he minimised the output of London.¹⁷ Gray’s ranking of Norfolk and Norwich as thirteenth in the 1350s is consistent with Heaton’s ranking it as fourteenth in the 1460s, and rather throws into question my own placing it as eighth. By contrast, Gray put Essex and Hertfordshire at eighteenth position in the 1350s, whereas the three later studies make them either sixth or seventh, which suggests that industry increased there in the later part of the fourteenth century. (It is quite clear from the ulnage figures that the centre of cloth production lay in Essex and not in Hertfordshire.)

Herbert Heaton¹⁸ analysed the figures largely from the returns rendered for the year 1468-9. He found that five counties, namely Suffolk, Somerset, Yorkshire, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire accounted for 62% of the total production. His inclusion of Gloucestershire amongst the leaders arose because he included Bristol within the County, rather than recognising it as a county in its own right. Otherwise his conclusions match those that can be drawn by taking average figures over the whole period. Heaton observed that “more pieces were made in Northampton than in Norfolk” and considered that Norfolk was “quite secondary in the field of woollen production”. In this, his conclusions are at variance with those of Bridbury.

The interpretation of the figures for London is problematical. Gray ranked it as fourth in the 1350s, whereas the three later comparisons puts it variously between ninth and thirteenth, which does not suggest that Gray under-rated London as Bridbury has suggested. Generally, the size of farms was steady, so that those few counties whose farms fluctuated widely must have had particular local factors at work, or they were influenced by political rather than economic factors.¹⁹ In particular, the farm of London varied considerably so it is possible that political

¹⁷ A.R. Bridbury, *Economic Growth England in the Later Middle Ages*, (Brighton, 1975) p.33. At the risk of undue repetition, it must be stressed that the ulnage figures only relate to woollen cloth and not to worsteds the manufacture of which formed an important trade in Norfolk.

¹⁸ Herbert Heaton, *Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries*, (Oxford, 1920) pp.84-88.

¹⁹ A drop in production is easy to engineer, because production simply ceases. A significant increase is much more difficult. If looms were not already extant, they would have to be purchased, warp prepared and set up, and then thread for weft obtained and woven. Apart from the technical side of these activities, there was also the need to finance the labour force during production and that could be a limiting factor.

factors may play at least as important a part as economic ones for that County.²⁰ Gray did not use the figures from 1399 in his calculations, but relied on returns, so no distortion was introduced by the use of the atypical farm fees of that year.

There are other differences between Gray's figures of the 1350s and the three later comparisons in addition to those already mentioned. It is likely that they arose because there was a shift in the location of centres of production between the 1350s and the 1390s. For example, there are difficulties in explaining the figures for Devon and Cornwall. (These counties were usually paired for ulnager purposes but the major part of the production was in Devon.) Gray in the 1350s and Merrick rank them as nineteenth and seventeenth respectively, whereas Gray 1390s and Heaton in the 1460s put them at eleventh place. The ulnager farm fees of these counties were very variable and it is possible there were some significant local factors, perhaps in Exeter, which caused these swings in the figures. In 1403, the farm fee for Devon was £40.²¹ This figure was replaced in 1405 by one of £10, which covered the two counties of Devon and Cornwall.²² This amount remained in force until 1411, when the farm rose to £12 for two years.²³ The administration of the two counties then reverted to a direct ulnager in 1413²⁴, and were not again farmed until 1436.²⁵ At that time the fee was set at a little over £3. In 1458 it increased to close on £7.²⁶ After the period of the approvers, the counties were again farmed from 1478, but at a new fee of £20.²⁷ Thus the rank position of these two counties is heavily dependent on which years were considered and there must have been some powerful local factors at work.

The other county which seems to have been subject to erratic changes in relative importance was Gloucestershire. In the 1350s it was ranked eighth, but the inclusion of Bristol meant that the figure was not strictly comparable with the Gloucestershire of later studies although in the 1460s the County alone was ninth. The other two comparisons, Grays 1390s and Merrick, place it at sixteenth or seventeenth. There seems to have been a change in the volume of the

²⁰ As will be shown below, some of the farms granted by Richard II in 1399 were far above the prevailing average for the county.

²¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, p.183 1403 Feb 4.

²² *Cal. Fine Rolls XIII, 1305-1413*, pp.9-10 1405 Nov 1.

²³ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIII, 1305-1413*, p.195 1411 May 12.

²⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV, 1413-1422*, p.12 1413 Mar 22.

²⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XV-I, 1430-1436*, p.251 1436 Jun 20.

²⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.218 1458 Nov 24.

²⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, p.155 1478 June 5.

production of woollens in the County around 1450. Before that date, the ulnage fluctuated between £7 and £10, then in 1451 it increased to £12²⁸ and in 1452 it jumped to £19.²⁹ The farm then remained at around £20 until an approver was appointed in 1466. When farming was again introduced in 1478, the farm was set at £16.³⁰

These four lists of the relative importance of the different counties show clearly that the cloth trade of Lincolnshire declined after the 1350s, when Gray put it in sixth place. By the 1390s he found that it had dropped to 13th, while the other two studies put it around 20th (out of about 28). The ulnage farm dropped from about £13 in the early part of the fifteenth century, to about £6 at the end of the 1470s.³¹ Even so, the County was not administered as a whole until 1454. Before that date, Lincoln and its constituent parts were either administered separately or grouped in various combinations. This pattern of separation followed by coalescence, together with the drop in farm fee, suggests that there had once been a flourishing industry which could support separate ulnagers, their offices later being amalgamated when the previous arrangements were no longer viable. It is probable that there was also a decline in woollen cloth production in the counties of Staffordshire and Nottinghamshire in the first half of the fifteenth century because the value of their farms declined. Since the national trend during those years was for a gentle rise in average farm fees, a decline in fees can only be indicative of a decline in production, both relatively and absolutely.

Apart from the increase in Essex and Hertfordshire, referred to above, these lists show that there were other shifts of trade in the late fourteenth century. For example, Gray placed both Somerset and Yorkshire lower in the 1350s than is found in the other three lists. The other three put Somerset as the largest producer in the country and Yorkshire about third. Gray's list for the 1350s is at variance with the other three in many respects. This may be because of flaws

²⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XVIII, 1445-1452*, p.194 1451 July 7.

²⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XVIII, 1445-1452*, p.245 1452 July 11

³⁰ *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, p.155 1478 June 5

³¹ Their manufacturing bases were not large to start with: the highest farm of any of this group was the £8 paid for Holland Lincolnshire in 1413. (*Cal. Fine Rolls XIV, 1413-1422*, p.8 1413 May 9.) By 1444, the farm for Boston and Holland had fallen to £2 13s 4d. It is not possible to follow the individual history of Boston, for later in the century the County came under the aegis of one ulnager and the farm was therefore no longer specific. Margaret Bonney noted that "Boston was 'ruined by the collapse of the foreign trade in wool' and the general trend of English overseas trade in the later medieval period was away from the east coast ports in favour of the capital". However the collapse of the export wool trade would not necessarily bring about the collapse of the woollen production industry. It may be that the economic stability of the region was undermined by the loss of the wool trade so that cloth production could no longer be financed, but the two are not necessarily linked. Margaret Bonney "The English medieval wool and cloth trade: new approaches for the local historian" *The Local Historian* 22, no 1 (1992 Feb), p.27.

in the figures he was using although Bridbury considered Gray's figures to be reliable. Bridbury questioned whether the figures of the 1350s were affected by the closeness of the Black Death at the end of the 1340s. If this is the case, the figures were affected differently in different parts of the country.³² The variation is more likely to arise from a change in the pattern of production in woollen cloth manufacture between the 1350s and the 1390s.

Amounts of Revenue

Thus figures are available which enable the reader to establish the relative importance of the different counties and their changes over time. The same figures have been used to establish a framework within which the contribution from individual counties can be considered. Because lists have been compiled showing the chief cloth producing counties, it is possible to examine the relative status of the more important counties. The Table 2-2 below is an extract from the list of counties using averages of their farms between 1394 and 1485. There are weaknesses in the figures. For example, it is assumed that farms are equally profitable and that the figures are not distorted by wide variations in the profits made by farmers. As has been explained, the list is broadly consistent with that of Gray for the 1390s and Heaton for the 1460s but somewhat at variance with that of Gray for the 1350s. The list produced below is not sensitive to variations over time as it is compiled from average farm fees for the whole period. The medieval practice of granting them severally makes the ranking of East Anglian counties particularly difficult and there is a degree of estimation involved, but the general conclusions are valid. Ranking the counties in order of magnitude of woollen cloth production, the chief counties are:

³² A.R. Bridbury, *Economic Growth England in the Later Middle Ages* (Brighton, 1975) p.33. Bridbury quoted Gray's figures to show that by the end of the fourteenth century something like ten thousand broadcloths were remaining in England, twice as many as at the beginning of the century despite a reduced population. However, he offered no opinion about which people able to afford to buy these additional expensive cloths.

County	Average Grant of Farm
Somerset	£131 14s 10d
Wiltshire	£84 19s 2d
Yorkshire	£76 4s 5d
Suffolk	>£75 0s 0d
Bristol	£61 12s 0d
Essex	>£40 0s 0d
Warwickshire	£37 17s 2d
Norfolk	£31 18s 0d
London	£30 16s 7d
Hampshire	£30 16s 5d

Source: Calendar of Fine Rolls

Table 2-2 Chief Cloth Producing Counties as Determined by the Size of their Farms 1394 - 1485

Bearing in mind that the mean of all grants was £32 4s 0d, it is apparent that the bulk of the woollen cloth trade was born by seven counties, Somerset, Wiltshire, Yorkshire, Suffolk, Bristol, Essex and Warwickshire, with fair contributions from Norfolk, London and Hampshire.³³ Over the 94 years of this study, the income from farms can be estimated at about £51520.³⁴ In all there were 54 places, or combinations of places, for which ulnager farms were granted, but most of the income came from about 15 of them,³⁵ and the 10 places on this list contributed over half the income.

Of this sum of £51,000, the farm income from Somerset contributed £7221 or 14% of the total and that sum was collected in the 56 years when Somerset was farmed separately. In addition, there were 16 years when Somerset and Dorset were jointly farmed, and another £1662 was raised. Dorset on its own only accounted for £715 over a period of over 50 years, or a tenth the amount of Somerset, so the joint farm income must have been generated mostly from Somerset. Despite the much greater revenue involved in Somerset, no town in that County ever paid its

³³ Altogether there were 54 counties and towns for which grants were made, but they were not all mutually exclusive. For example, Winchester had a separate grant in the 1390s, but was later combined with Hampshire.

³⁴ These figures relate only to the income from farming. In addition income was sometimes raised by ulnagers directly answerable to the Exchequer. Thus the figures will be understated, but the proportions will be generally valid.

³⁵ deleted.

ulnage separately to the Exchequer, which suggests a much more diffuse industry than that of Dorset, where Sherbourne was ulnaged separately for some years.

Wiltshire was the County which paid the next largest average farm. Salisbury was usually specifically mentioned within the grants for Wiltshire because the town had been administered separately before 1404. From payments spread over 68 years, the farm of the Wiltshire ulnage produced £5824 or 11% of the national farm total. By comparison, Hampshire's contribution over a period of 70 years was £2215 or 4%. Bristol's farm fees amounted to £4257 for the years in which it was farmed. These figures can be combined to build a picture of a high quality woollen cloth trade based on Somerset and Wiltshire, and Bristol, with an overlap into Hampshire.

There was a centre of activity based in East Anglia. It is not as easy to identify the relative position of the individual counties as it was with those of the south-west, because the farms were usually granted to clusters of counties which rarely lasted for more than 20 years. It would seem that the busiest county was probably Suffolk followed by Essex, and then London and Norfolk. The difficulties of interpreting the London figures have already been outlined.

Yorkshire was a major centre of the woollen cloth industry, particular around York itself but other towns in the County produced significant numbers of cloth. Finally, and on a much smaller geographical platform was Warwickshire. Since the County paid £2307 in 64 years, or an average farm of about £36 per annum, the density of cloth production in the County must have been considerable: it was undoubtedly centred on Coventry. Warwickshire is considerably smaller than Hampshire, and yet the average farm was greater by about £4 10s 0d a year. An examination of Particular accounts within the various counties would give an indication of how the industry was distributed within each payment area, as will be shown later for Hampshire.

Changes in Farm Income between 1394 and 1485

This section intends to look at changes in farm fees and to consider the counties where such changes took place. In 1394 farming had ceased, and the first subsequent farm was granted in 1398.³⁶ In 1399 a number of counties were let to farm by Richard II. The fees were set much higher than was found subsequently. This may have been because they were based on the

³⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI, 1391-1399*, p.255 1398 April 28. The farm of Suffolk was granted to John Arnold of Ipswich, for ten years, at a fee of £54 per annum.

incomes received in the successful years of the 1390s, or it may be that these large farm rents represented an attempt by Richard II to raise money quickly in view of the challenge to his government: therefore they may represent gifts to the king. There is evidence, partly from the ulnage records themselves, that there was a sharp downturn in production between 1399 and 1403. Thus these high fees might have been reasonable when granted, but ceased to be valid within a very short time. Six counties stand out as places where the 1399 farm was significantly greater than when the farm was next granted. The figures are shown in the Table 2-3 below.

County	1399 Farm Fee	Next Farm Fee	Year Of Next Farm
Somerset	£220 0s 0d	£106 13s 4d	1403
Bristol	£130 0s 0d	£51 0s 0d	1406
London	£33 6s 8d	£24 0s 0d	1403
Warwickshire ³⁷	£61 0s 0d	£32 12s 6d	1408
Gloucestershire	£20 0s 0d	£6 13s 4d	1406
Dorset	£22 0s 0d	£14 13s 4d	1405

Source: Calendar of Fine Rolls

Table 2-3 Comparison of Farms in 1399 and those immediately succeeding

These farms, granted in 1399, hardly lasted any time at all, even if the farmers ever took up their offices. They were granted in June and July, and Richard's reign had ended by 30 September. It was not until 1403 that farming again became the normal way of administering the ulnage. It was possible to follow through the grants of farm from 1403, and hence to study the income which the Exchequer expected to receive, and the variations. Having established a national pattern of income, it then becomes apparent which individual counties deviated from this pattern, and to consider possible explanations. Changes in the amount of revenue brought in by farming could have arisen for two reasons. In some cases the number of counties being farmed was changed, some being farmed and others administered directly. In other cases, the amount of farm from individual counties might change. Both factors influenced the amount of income from farming in the years under examination. The section that follows examines the

³⁷ The settlement of 1403 has been omitted. Under that the farm was set at £9 15s 6d for the first year and £62 thereafter. However the agreement only lasted 2½ years.

fluctuations of ulnag farm income and the reasons for change.³⁸ For convenience, the figures are examined in ten year units, starting from 1403.

Henry IV started to appoint farmers in 1403 when he let 16 appointments to farm. This first tranche of farming raised rents of £661 and encompassed the bulk of the industry. Over the three following years most of the remaining small counties were also let to farm. Bristol seems to have been the only substantial cloth producing place which was not included in the changed arrangements. The first farm for Bristol to be enrolled in the Fine Rolls was granted in 1406,³⁹ although it is possible that there had been an earlier grant which had not been enrolled. In 1404 Northamptonshire reverted to direct management causing a drop in the overall national farm rent of £20.⁴⁰ A peak of income from farming was reached in 1412, when it reached the sum of £727.

The years between 1413 and 1423 brought in farm income above £700. They would have been higher but for two places which ceased to be farmed. The first of these was Wiltshire, where the farm had been £120⁴¹ until 1413. In 1415, Wiltshire was again let to farm, but at a dramatically reduced farm of £80.⁴² The Fine Rolls give no indication of what could have brought about this apparent reduction in the County's woollen industry.⁴³ It seems likely that there had been a major alteration in the pattern of production in the years between 1408 and 1413. Whether this alteration was due to a shift in the type of cloth being produced, with more non-taxable cloth being made, or whether there was an overall drop in production, cannot be determined from the ulnag records. Their value lies in their showing that there was a change in output pattern which local historians may be able to explain. Despite the interruption caused by events in Wiltshire, the farm fees rose to a national total of £719 in 1419. In 1423 Holland in Lincolnshire ceased to

³⁸ The figures used to make the calculations have been taken from the grants of farm found in the Calendar of Fine Rolls. An assumption has been made that a grant continued to be valid until replaced by another grant. This is probably not correct in all cases, but is close enough to give an outline of the income from farms.

³⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIII, 1405-1413*, p.10 1406 May 3.

⁴⁰ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, p.233 1404 June 10. When farming was resumed in the County, the first farm was £2 (*Cal. Fine Rolls XIII, 1405-1413*, p.224 1412 Mar 12), and it was not until 1483 that the farm even approached £20.

⁴¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIII, 1405-1413*, pp.105-6 1408 Mar 5.

⁴² *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV, 1413-1422*, p.111 1415 Nov 8, but see also p.111 1415 June 14, when directly appointed ulnagers were appointed.

⁴³ There is no hint that the farm rent was reduced as a favour to the farmer, as may have happened in Yorkshire in the 1380s. (*Cal. Pat. Rolls, Ric II, 1391-1396*, p.528 1394 Nov 25.)

be farmed,⁴⁴ producing a drop of £8: with other smaller changes the annual total came down to £708.

The decade between 1423 and 1433 saw an overall gentle rise in the amount of farm fees. There were minor changes in the total amount of fees. There was also a partial re-organisation of the arrangements in East Anglia. Since 1403 the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Hertfordshire, together with the town of Norwich, had been administered jointly. Their farm rent had risen from £133 in 1403⁴⁵ to £140 in 1417.⁴⁶ The farm remained at this level until 1425 when it was let at a fee of £128 7s 8d.⁴⁷ The reason for the drop in fee, was that five places in Suffolk, described in the grant as “towns”, were to be ulnaged separately.⁴⁸ Their farm was let at a fee of £12 3s 4d, so the two grants together brought in slightly more income than the single grant had done previously. In other counties, there were a few small rises in the following years, including one of £2 in Northamptonshire, from £4 to nearly £7.⁴⁹ Although small in money terms, this represented quite a substantial proportional rise. There was a drop of £33 in the total farm in 1431 when London reverted to a directly employed ulnager for about eighteen months.⁵⁰

By 1433 the national income from farming the ulnage was £733, and the following decade saw the farm income rise to £745. This was a period of considerable stability, when farm incomes hardly changed. Apart from an increase in London, the biggest change came about in East Anglia. The farm for Suffolk and Essex was increased from £94 7s 8d to £100 7s 8d, and that for the five towns was increased by one mark to £14 13s 4d.⁵¹ In 1443, the farm total for the whole country dropped slightly to £743 because Holland ceased to be farmed for a year.⁵²

⁴⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls XV, 1422-1430*, p.17 1423 Jan 25.

⁴⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, p.184 1403 May 12.

⁴⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV, 1413-1422*, pp.154-5 1417 Mar 1.

⁴⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XV, 1422-1430*, p.113, 1425 Nov 25.

⁴⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XV, 1422-1430*, p.114 1426 Mar 7. The five “towns” were Lavenham, Great Waldingfield, Little Waldingfield, Brent Eleigh and Acton.

⁴⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV, 1413-1422*, p.394 1421 Nov 12, *Cal. Fine Rolls XV, 1422-1430*, pp.143-4 1426 Oct 13.

⁵⁰ *Cal. Fine Rolls XVI, 1430-1437*, pp.6-7 1431 Feb 5, and p.7 1431 Jun 29. The man who had been farmer, John Bedderenden, ceased to be farmer in 1431, and then became directly employed ulnager for a few months. (*Cal. Fine Rolls XVI, 1430-1437*, p.6 1431 Feb 5). London's withdrawal from farming does not appear to have been caused by a drop in taxable output of cloths. The implication is that the change came about for other reasons. The ulnager appointed in June 1431, Robert Charyngworth, subsequently became the farmer in 1432 at a farm of £35. (*Cal. Fine Rolls XVI, 1430-1437*, p.7 1431 June 29, and p.72 1432 Feb 23.) In 1438, the farm for London was increased to £40, (*Cal. Fine Rolls XVI, 1437-1445*, p.63 1439 Feb 16.) so the industry was increasing there in the 1430s.

⁵¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XVI, 1437-1445*, p.155 1439 Dec 21; p.64 1439 June 16.

⁵² *Cal. Fine Rolls XVI, 1437-1445*, p.259 1443 May 28.

It was the decade between 1443 and 1453 that saw a dramatic rise in income from £743 to £797. This was an unsettled decade, in which the farms of some counties increased dramatically, while at the same time those of other counties declined sharply. It was a period of polarisation in which the successful surged ahead, at the expense of others. Increases were made in the farms of Suffolk and Essex, which increased from £100 to £114;⁵³ in Gloucestershire, which increased from £9 to £20;⁵⁴ in Wiltshire which increased from £80 to £88,⁵⁵ and in Somerset, which increased from £128 to £159⁵⁶. There were also increases in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, although neither County was a large ulnager payer. Offsetting these increased farms were several that diminished. These included Dorset, Northumberland and Hertfordshire. In Dorset the farm dropped from £17 to £3; although Sherbourne was farmed separately for some years from 1440,⁵⁷ the £1 farm rent received from there in no way compensated for the drop of £14 from the County. Northumberland was another county which appears to have suffered a collapse of industry, albeit from a low tax base. In 1444, its farm dropped from 48s 8d to 10s.⁵⁸ This was the first time the farm of cloths in the County had been below £2.⁵⁹ Hertfordshire also dropped its fee by a significant per centage from £4 13s 4d to £2 13s 4d in 1448.⁶⁰

The decade from 1453 to 1463 is one of the most interesting because farm fees increased and then plummeted. There was a period of rise to £807 in 1455 and 1456, but the increase could not be sustained, and the total dropped to £748 in 1457 and dropped again to £715 in 1459. By 1463 the total income from farming was reduced to £620. Some of this drop can be accounted for because some counties ceased to be farmed. For example, in Surrey and Sussex no farmer could be found in 1457 and an ulnager was appointed on terms to be agreed with the treasurer, bringing a drop of £20 in overall farm income.⁶¹ A similar state of affairs arose in Warwickshire

⁵³ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.61 1454 Mar 3.

⁵⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.61 1453 Oct 15.

⁵⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.63 1454 May 9. (took effect 1453 June 24).

⁵⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.61 1454 Mar 3. (took effect 1453 Apr 1).

⁵⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XV II, 1437-1445*, p.307 1445 Jun 20; pp.155-6 1440 Jan 4.

⁵⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XV II, 1437-1445*, p.307 1444 Nov 10.

⁵⁹ The last time the County was mentioned in connection with the ulnage in the Fine Rolls was in 1461, when the farm was set at 12s 8d. It is possible that Northumberland and the other northern counties, which produced very little ulnage revenue, were administered with Yorkshire in later years. (See *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.25 1461 Nov 21).

⁶⁰ *Cal. Fine Rolls XV III, 1445-1452*, p.106 1448 Nov 9.

⁶¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.200 1457 Dec 2.

in 1461, when there was a drop of nearly £39 in recorded farm income.⁶² The ulnage for London also contributed towards the drop in farm fees. In 1453 London had been farmed at £40, but again there was difficulty in finding a farmer, although by 1459 Hugh Fylyngley had agreed to pay £27 13s 4d.⁶³ The most dramatic single cause of the drop in income from farming was brought about by a drop in the farm fees of Somerset: in 1458 the fees were set at only £100, compared with the previous figure of £159.⁶⁴

During the mid 1460s most counties ceased to be farmed and were administered by approvers⁶⁵ who were paid by the Exchequer. By 1473 only three counties appear to have been farmed, bringing in a total revenue of £7 12s 6d between them.⁶⁶ Even this figure is not certain because other arrangements may have been made which are not apparent from the Fine Rolls. During the disturbances of 1469 and 1470, several counties were let to farm but these arrangements did not survive past 1471. On the whole the farm rents charged in 1470 are consistent with those found on either side of the years of the approvers, with the sole exception of Oxford and Berkshire, where the farm was set at £30 in 1470⁶⁷. It had been £25 until 1463, and was set at £27 in 1478.

In 1478, Parliament ordered the cessation of the use of approvers, and farming was re-introduced. In that year twenty grants were made, the fees of which amounted to £539. The remaining approvers were replaced in the following year, and the total farm income increased to £732. Part of this increase came about because the farm of Yorkshire was increased from £67 to £80⁶⁸, a figure which is consistent with the rents payable in the years before 1467. The sum due from farm fees appears to have risen above £800 in 1480 and 1481, after which it dropped to £701 in 1482, and below £700 in the last two years under review. It would be unwise to make much of the figures from 1482, when the nation's administration was in an advanced state of decay. Not all counties appear to have had valid arrangements in those years

⁶² *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.24 1461 Jun 26.

⁶³ In 1457, Peter Bowman was appointed approver and no farm fee was received. (*Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.175 1457 Feb 9. (The role of approvers is outlined in chapter 3) In the following year, Bowman took control as farmer at £26 13s 4d (*Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.218 1458 Nov 30.) and in the following year he was replaced by Hugh Fylyngley who agreed to pay an additional £1. (*Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.219 1459 Mar 12).

⁶⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.200 1458 May 15.

⁶⁵ For a description of the role of an approver, see pages 71 and 89/90.

⁶⁶ They were Middlesex which was farmed at £1, Lincolnshire at £6, Northumberland at 12s 6d.

⁶⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.276 1470 Nov 11. See also p.140 1464 Jan 14; and *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, p.155 1478 June 5

⁶⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, p.156 1478 Nov 24.

and the records are not as clear as earlier. Nonetheless, it is remarkable just how much the administration did manage to continue despite the political troubles of the time. It is a sign of the strong central administration of late medieval England, that the tax gathering structure largely continued despite civil war.

Quite apart from the general trends discussed above, there are three instances where the changes in farms were at variance with the general trend. They must reflect profound changes in the industry in the counties concerned, and as such are worth mentioning. In the latter part of the fifteenth century, in Devon and Cornwall, Northamptonshire and Rutland, and Kent, dramatically atypical changes took place in the levels of farm which can only reflect changes in the level of production. The farm of Devon and Cornwall was depressed in the middle years of the century, when most other places were flourishing,⁶⁸ and then rose again after 1460 to a high of £20 1s 0d in 1483.⁶⁹ Before the 1450s Northamptonshire and Rutland had been farmed at rents of between £5 and £6. This increased to £7 6s 8d in 1454,⁷⁰ and rose to £18 6s 8d in 1478.⁷¹ There seems to have been a successful cloth industry there in the 1390s, for the farm fee in 1403 was set at £20, although the farmer only held office for a few months. Kent was another County that appeared to prosper after 1460. Gray had placed Kent as third in his list of importance in the 1350s, whereas the other lists put it at about twelfth. There was an increase in the farm of Kent between the mid-1460s and the 1480s, most noticeably in 1462, when it was set at £20⁷² as opposed to the £15 that had prevailed since 1438. There was another change in 1478, when the farm was increased to £26 13s 4d.⁷³ These three examples were so definitely against the trend, and so pronounced that they must reflect major changes in the levels of production in the counties concerned. It must be left to local historians to ascertain the reasons for these fluctuations.

Hampshire

The final section of the examination of the income of the ulnager will be devoted to a case study of Hampshire. Hampshire comes close to the national average in payment of ulnager fees so there are particular advantages in examining its payment pattern in some detail. The evidence

⁶⁸ For example, the farm in 1438 was let at £3 6s 8d.; *Cal. Fine Rolls XVII, 1437-1445*, pp.36-7 1438 Feb 20.

⁶⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, p.265 1483 July 17.

⁷⁰ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.103 1454 Dec 30.

⁷¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, p.155 1478 June 18.

⁷² *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.26 1462 Jan 29.

⁷³ *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, pp.155-6 1478 Oct 21.

will be drawn from the Particular accounts associated with the Ulnage Rolls, as well as the Ulnage Rolls and the Fine Rolls. By looking at all the material, it becomes possible to compare the size of farm with the money collected by the directly-employed ulnagers. Firstly the returns for the years from 1394 to 1403 will be examined, and then changes in the amounts of farm fees. Finally the period of the approvers will be compared with the later farms.

All the returns have been examined, so it has been possible to see some of the detailed fluctuations of trade, especially in the first decade when all the money collected by the ulnagers was accounted for at the Exchequer. This provides a set of details not available at other times. The figures are not particularly easy to use because the returns are for widely varying lengths of time. However they can be used to calculate a nominal monthly rate of income for the period from July 1394 to August 1403. The details are set out as a table in Appendix 3. This table shows that the most obvious fact about the figures is that, in the 1390s, the ulnage paid in Winchester, which included its suburbs and its soke, was about three times as great as that paid in the rest of the County. -

Nevertheless, within the decade from 1394, the figures for Winchester showed a decline. Although they fluctuated, the clear trend was downwards. In the first return, the annual rate of return was £46 16s 6d, but by the year ending September 1403 it was down to £32 11s 6d. This decline was not as large as that which took place by 1466/7, but it was an omen of worse to come. The County, outside Winchester, started off the decade with payments that were equivalent to an annual rate of £14 18s 2d and then diminished to £4 0s 8d in the year to November 1403. The County figures were especially liable to fluctuate and it is not possible to be sure whether this was as a result of a fundamental flaw in the method of calculating the annual rate of return, or whether the County's production was subject to large swings.

The muddle in the Chancery in October 1399 is discussed in chapter 3, and an examination of the returns shows that there were six months when there was no ulnager for the County although there was an appointee in Winchester. It is probable that the City corporation ensured that the collection of the revenue continued, because it was the main beneficiary of the income. The County's ulnage recommenced at the end of 1399, but at a new low level of an average of 14 cloths a month.⁷⁴ It can hardly have been economic to maintain the organisation necessary

⁷⁴ It is tempting to wonder whether some of the cloths were not being ulnaged in the County, but were brought into Winchester for payment.

to collect the tax across the cloth-producing towns of Hampshire, especially with the centre of the County being administered separately. The amalgamation of City and County for ulnage purposes was becoming inescapable.

In Winchester, a drop in the number of cloths ulnaged occurred in 1396 and then in 1402. In Salisbury, Wiltshire, there was a drop in the number of cloths ulnaged after 1400. Bridbury has suggested that this decline in the number of cloths sealed by the Salisbury ulnager after 1400 might be because the cloths were being marketed at Westminster Fair rather than being sold in Salisbury.⁷⁵ However there was no increase in ulnage fees for either London or Middlesex that in any way compensates for the drop in ulnage from Wiltshire. It seems that there was a decrease in production in both Hampshire and Wiltshire around 1400.

Winchester and Hampshire were not combined administratively until a grant of farm was made in 1404. (The administration of the ulnage in Winchester in the year 1403/4 is not clear from the records although it may have been farmed.) The two were administered jointly for the rest of the period under discussion. The first farm fee for Hampshire and Winchester was set at £30, which seems reasonable when compared with the combined ulnage income of £36 11s 8d for the year 1402/3. The grants of farm are set out in Table 2-4 below. The increases and decreases of fee thereafter are largely in line with the national pattern, avoiding the extremes experienced by some counties. In particular the County was not the subject of aggressive bidding for the farm in the early 1450s, as was the case in some counties.

⁷⁵ A.R. Bridbury, *Medieval English Clothmaking* (London, 1982) p.73.

Year Of Grant	Amount
	£ s d
1404	30 0 0
1409	30 0 0
1413	32 0 0
1415	32 0 0
1422	32 0 0
1431	32 0 0
1432	32 13 4
1442	33 6 8
1462	33 6 8
1470 ⁷⁷	33 6 8
1478	26 13 4
1483	26 13 4
1485	26 13 4

Source: *Calendar of Fine Rolls*

Table 2-4 Size of Farm Fees paid for the Hampshire Ulnage, including Winchester

Between the years 1464 and 1478, the Hampshire ulnage was in the hands of approvers in common with the rest of England. The approvers were required to submit detailed returns, although not all the returns were enrolled. It is possible, therefore to compare the income collected by the approvers with the farms on either side of this period as is shown in Table 2-5 below.

⁷⁷ In 1470 Thomas Newby was granted the farm of Hampshire although there is no evidence that he took up the office. See *Cal. Fine Rolls, XX, 1461-1471*, p.276, 1470 Dec 1.

No return has survived for the year 1469-70 and John Farley should have submitted one for the year 1470-71.

Dates	Period	Revenue	Annual Rate
		£ s d.	£ s d.
1466-67	1 year	30 11 2.	30 11 2.
1467-69	2 years	54 7 8.	27 3 10.
1469-71	2 years	45 4 7½	22 12 3¾
1471-72	1 year	27 3 11¼	27 3 11¼
1472-73	1 year	28 2 8.	28 2 8.
1473-74	no return		
1474-76	2 years	54 0 6¼	27 0 3¼
1476-78	2 years	40 10 0.	20 5 0.

Source: Ulnage Rolls

Table 2-5 The Income From The Years Of The Approvers

The farm fees for Hampshire, before and after these years, were higher than the annual rate of ulnage submitted to the Exchequer by the approver. The approvers were to be remunerated at the discretion of the Exchequer and the sums they received were not shown in the ulnage records. Farmers were found at the rate of £33 6s 8d before this period and at the rate of £26 13s 4d after the period of approvership,⁷⁶ either the farmers were operating at a loss, or the approvers were extracting some of the payments. Since Richard More was the final approver for Hampshire, and then became its farmer, he must have known what the state of the industry was in the County, and have decided that the profits were worthwhile. This suggests that he may have been under-paying the Exchequer while he was approver.

Thus the study of all the figures available for Hampshire enables the details of trade fluctuation in the first decade to be observed. They reveal that Winchester's trade was in decline by 1400. The farm fees more or less follow the national pattern until the 1460s, albeit without the excesses experienced by some counties in the early 1450s. The approvers collected less money in each year than the annual fees contracted by the farmers either side of the years of approvership. This may be because of the inherent dishonesty of the approvers, but it may also reflect a period when the cloth trade was in the doldrums. The drop in exports in those years give at least partial credence to this explanation.

⁷⁶ There would have been a problem if the farm of Hampshire was set at less than 40 marks, because the crown was committed to pay that sum to Winchester, for the upkeep of its walls, from the ulnage income.

Summary and Conclusions

As has been pointed out, the correlation of ulnage farm rents and the state of an individual county's woollen cloth trade was not a very close one. Obviously, the farm fee cannot be greater than the income, or the farm would not be taken up, and if much below the income, it is likely that there would have been competitive tendering, which would have brought it closer to a realistic market price. Inevitably, the fee would be based on historic information and would reflect the state of the industry that had just passed, rather than reflecting estimates of future trends. Thus the ulnage farm fees should be taken as an indicator of the state of the high-class woollen trade in a county along with other information. They are not sufficient by themselves to show the state of the industry, and probably reflect historic information, but they should not lightly be ignored.

Disbursement

So far this chapter has been concerned with the gathering of the income from the ulnage. The records also show how much of the revenue was spent. When the ulnage income was allocated, it was usual for the grant to be enrolled in the Patent Rolls or in the Close Rolls, or both, and these records provide the information upon which this section is based. Generally, but not invariably, grants were recorded in the Patent Rolls,⁷⁷ and attachments in the Close Rolls.⁷⁸ Most of the ulnage revenues were individually assigned to specific commitments, and usually to specific people for stated reasons. The mechanics of collection and payment are not generally apparent from the ulnage records, but it seems that some, but not all, the revenue went to the Exchequer for disbursement there. The major exception to this was during the period of the approvers, who were charged with collection and payment of the money. This was a system by which central government could lose control of the revenue, and it did not last long.

This part of the chapter is devoted to a consideration of the uses to which the ulnage revenues were put. The revenues were individually allocated to meet specific commitments, rather than the king's income being aggregated and then his commitments met from the global sum.⁷⁹ The

⁷⁷ For example, the grant to Robert Coton of £10 yearly from the ulnage of London was recorded in the Patent Rolls. *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen IV, 1399-1401, p.108 1399 Nov 21.

⁷⁸ For example, the order to the ulnagers of Wilshire to pay George Chadelyche the sum of 100 marks yearly for life is to be found in the *Cal. Close Rolls*, Hen V, 1413-19, p.143 1414 Oct 12.

⁷⁹ The logic was presumably based on manorial income, in which the incomes from specific estate holdings were dedicated to meet specific needs.

section which follows seeks to describe how the kings allocated their income from the ulnage. After a brief section on administrative aspects of the arrangements, which will be followed by a mention of the correction of errors, the chapter will examine the disbursements of ulnage revenue by each king in turn.

Introduction and Administration

The ulnage revenues were used to meet some of the smaller commitments undertaken by late medieval monarchs and their examination shows some of the expenditure necessary for the upkeep of the royal households. The figures also provide an insight into the web of patronage by which the nexus of state was maintained. Some putative beneficiaries may have been unpaid, or only received their money after further action on their part, but the intention to pay them was there, and a study of those intentions will show what sort of commitments the kings regarded as appropriate.

Throughout the period under consideration, most of the payments from the ulnage went to royal servants. These servants were not the baronial courtiers but strata below that; those who kept the royal household functioning in a way appropriate for a fifteenth-century monarch. The recipients of grants from the ulnage were yeoman and serjeants, not men holding high offices of state.

Accounting for the ulnage revenues was one of the duties of the Exchequer clerks. Part of their duties was to gather in the revenue and then see that it was paid to the nominated beneficiary, but paid only once. The detailed allocation of income must have caused accounting problems, though they would have been well understood as this practice was standard for the royal income. Before money could be paid out, it would be necessary to ensure that it had been received, and not spent on something else. There would have been a need to keep records to show which ulnagers had paid money in, and for what time-period, as well as to maintain records of disbursements. In the last section it was shown that the farm of Hampshire in the late 1470s was let at 40 marks, although the revenue collected by the approver had apparently been less than this. Presumably the farm could not be let for less, because 40 marks per annum was promised to the City of Winchester. Thus, by implication, when farms were being negotiated, regard was had for the commitments that they must meet. A detailed study of the expenditure of the ulnage revenues for Oxfordshire and Berkshire is to be found in Appendix 4.

Needless to say, all did not go without errors and occasional problems, and their rectification can be glimpsed in the Close Rolls and the Patent Rolls. Problems arose when payment of a grant was laid to a form of revenue collection that no longer existed. For example, in 1394, Henry Berkhamsted, king's esquire, surrendered his letters patent which had granted him his wages of 7½d a day and 46s 8d annually for his robe, because they were to be paid by the farmer of the subsidy of woollen cloths; the grant was no longer valid because "there will be no farmer thereof but only approvers and collectors".⁸⁰ A similar problem arose with the annual grant to the City of Winchester, which foundered because the liability was laid to the farmer of the ulnage, and the post no longer existed from 1394. Therefore, in 1397, the City was granted amended letters patent.⁸¹

Some grants had to be replaced because of unsatisfactory drafting. The most common fault was apportioning only the ulnage, when in fact the revenue from both the ulnage and the subsidy would be needed to provide the full amount of grant. It seems likely that the tax was known familiarly as "the ulnage" and recipients did not realise that the subsidy provided the major part of the revenue. John de Roche [1396]⁸², William Bagot [1398]⁸³ and Henry Berkhamsted [1394]⁸⁴ received grants from the subsidy alone but these were atypical. Grants against the ulnage alone are found right up to Richard III's reign, when Richard Scopeham, a yeoman of the crown, was granted 6d a day from the ulnage of Kent.⁸⁵ Normally the shortfall was noticed soon after the grant was made, probably when funds were insufficient to meet the commitment, and then new letters patent were issued. For example, William Halyday had obtained new letters patent in order to receive his £20 13s 4d from the subsidy and ulnage of Kent in 1413.⁸⁶ This was the whole farm of cloth revenue of Kent; so his grant against the ulnage alone was clearly insufficient. In 1439 Walter, Lord Hungerford, had had to obtain replacement letters patent to rectify a similar error.⁸⁷ Some grants were charged against the revenues of ulnage, subsidy and moiety of forfeiture. Others were charged against the ulnage and subsidy and thus had no claim on any moiety of forfeiture due to the crown. This latter was an irregular source of funds but its

⁸⁰ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Ric II, 1391-1396, p.514 1394 Nov 14.

⁸¹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Ric II, 1396-1399, p.73 1397 Feb 16.

⁸² *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Ric II, 1396-1399, p.9 1396 July 8.

⁸³ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Ric II, 1396-1399, p.427 1398 Sept 20.

⁸⁴ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Ric II, 1391-1396, p.514 1394 Nov 14.

⁸⁵ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Edw IV, Edw V, Ric III, 1476-1484, p.457 1484 Feb 27.

⁸⁶ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen V, 1413-1416, p.96 1413 Aug 28.

⁸⁷ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1436-1441, p.240 1439 Feb 10.

inclusion made for a more comprehensive claim on the revenues. The first grant of which included a claim on the moiety of forfeiture was made in 1438 to Thomas Haseley, a clerk of the crown of the Chancery.⁸⁸ In 1439, similar provision was made for Robert Coton, in lieu of an earlier grant made to him by Henry IV.⁸⁹ Other grants followed this all-inclusive form and they became common, although not universal, in the years following 1444.

Thus the ulnage, although a small tax, was not neglected by medieval administrators, who were kept busy ensuring that the revenue was received, and then seeing to the payment of the many recipients to whom it was granted. They dealt with occasional drafting errors, but on the whole the administration worked reasonably smoothly and it would seem that the people meant to benefit from the ulnage mostly did so. The uses to which the income was put by each king will be discussed below. Since each king had different pressures upon him, the expenditure will be considered for each king separately.

Richard II's Use Of The Ulnage From 1394

Apart from the grant to the City of Winchester, most of the grants made by Richard II in the last years of his reign were to his household staff. The grants made to Henry Berkhamsted and John de Roche have been referred to above in connection with drafting errors. However, de Roche's difficulties were not over, and the munificence of being granted 100 marks a year was somewhat overshadowed by the reality. The promised grant was not paid to him and he therefore sought an attachment, which was enrolled in the Close Rolls in 1397, and backdated to 1394,⁹⁰ in order to obtain the money. He was not alone in facing this problem. In 1395 Henry Berkhamsted had had an attachment enrolled in the Close Rolls for arrears due from 1 October 1390,⁹¹ as did Roger de Claryndon, a king's knight, who was owed three different sets of payment.⁹² The other king's knight of those years to benefit from the ulnage was William Bagot, who in 1398 was granted £20 a year from the subsidy of cloth of Warwickshire.⁹³ The grant had to be re-issued because the original was poorly drafted and did not specify where the money was to come from. Bagot then made doubly sure of his money, because, on the same day as the re-issue, the

⁸⁸ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1436-1441*, p.188 1438 Mar 1.

⁸⁹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1436-1441*, p.241 1439 Feb 16.

⁹⁰ *Cal. Close Rolls, Ric II, 1396-99*, p.37 1397 Feb 17.

⁹¹ *Cal. Close Rolls, Ric II, 1392-96*, p.346 1395 May 9.

⁹² *Cal. Close Rolls, Ric II, 1392-96*, p.355 1395 Jun 16; p.446 1396 Jan 14 (two different attachments).

⁹³ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Ric II, 1396-1399*, p.427 1398 Sept 20.

attachment was enrolled in the Close Rolls.⁹⁴ There were only five attachments relating to the ulnage to be found in the Close Rolls between 1395 and 1399, and four of them showed payment several years in arrears. No other king served his annuitants so badly.

Henry IV's Use Of The Ulnage

The Rolls do not show whether Henry IV honoured the debts of his predecessor. He continued the pattern of using the income from the ulnage primarily to pay his household. Thus, in 1399, the ulnage and subsidy of Oxford and Berkshire were charged with £10 per annum to Robert Morle of Oxford, his esquire.⁹⁵ Henry IV used the ulnage to provide grants for four more men who were specifically identified as his household retainers.⁹⁶ He also made various re-arrangements of the source of his grants. He transferred the liability for some grants, originally made against other royal income, to the ulnage revenues. For example, in 1403, Robert Fauconer was granted 3d a day from the cloth revenues - ulnage, subsidy and customs of York - "because the Sheriff is charged with so much that he cannot pay him".⁹⁷ In 1402 George Chadelyche's annual grant of 100 marks from the Exchequer was replaced by a charge on the cloth revenues of Wiltshire.⁹⁸ The payment of Ralph Pope's 6d a day was moved from Exchequer to ulnage at about the same time.⁹⁹ Towards the end of Henry IV's reign, two other grants were transferred to the ulnage. These were the grants made to two of the king's servants, John Arondell¹⁰⁰ and Richard Cressy.¹⁰¹ These transfers may have represented administrative re-adjustments because there is nothing in the Close Rolls to suggest that the original grants were not paid.

⁹⁴ *Cal. Close Rolls, Ric II, 1396-99*, p.338 1398 Sept 20.

⁹⁵ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Ric II, 1396-1399*, p.118 1399 Dec 1.

⁹⁶ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw IV, 1408-1413*, p.171 1410 Mar 3, John Hawkeswell, king's esquire; p.453 1413 Jan 21, Richard Cressy, king's esquire, serjeant of the king's hall.

Cal. Close Rolls, Hen IV, 1402-5, p.60 1403 Apr 8, Richard Cliderowe king's esquire; *Cal. Close Rolls, Hen IV, 1409-13*, p.267 1412 5 Jan 18, George Chadelyche. ~~There~~ were payments to other people who may have had like status but their status was not mentioned in the enrolments.

⁹⁷ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen IV, 1401-1405*, p.265 1403 Jan 7.

⁹⁸ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen IV, 1401-1405*, p.32 1402 Jan 13, and replaced *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen IV, 1408-1413*, p.358 1411 Jan 18.

⁹⁹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen IV, 1401-1405*, p.53 1402 Apr 1. This grant to Ralph Pope as a 'yeoman of the chamber of the king's son the prince.' A payment to a servant in someone else's household was unusual.

¹⁰⁰ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen IV, 1401-1405*, p.327 1403 Nov 2, and replaced *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen IV, 1408-1413*, p.146 1409 Nov 13.

¹⁰¹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen IV, 1408-1413*, p.453 1413 Jan 21.

Henry IV made the only grant to a woman who was not a queen that is found between 1394 and 1446. This grant of £20 a year was made to Blanche Chalouns in 1410.¹⁰² No reason was given for this grant in her letters patent, so we cannot determine her role from these records. In 1415 she obtained an attachment of money through the Close Rolls with liability backdated to the accession of Henry V.¹⁰³

Henry V's Use Of The Ulnage

Henry V did not have the advantage of coming to power as a result of rebellion and therefore more obviously inherited his father's commitments to his household staff. He may, of course, have retained their services too, but the ulnage records do not normally show this. However some payments were continued, including that to Blanche Chalouns noted above. Another beneficiary whose income was continued by the new king was George Chadelyche, king's knight. He had been granted 100 marks for life on the subsidy and ulnage of Wiltshire in 1402, and this was renewed in 1411. His grant was attached in 1412 and the attachment was confirmed by Henry V in 1414. (It was confirmed again in 1423, at the beginning of Henry VI's reign.¹⁰⁴)

Generally, Henry made few grants from the subsidy and ulnage, because most of the income went to Queen Joan, consort of Henry IV. However, in 1412, the ulnage was used to pay compensation to John de Skelton, chivaler, ^{a grant} of 100 marks a year for his Scottish prisoner Mordac Steward.¹⁰⁵ Henry V's few household grants were to two serjeants of his cellar, and to his minstrel.¹⁰⁶ In 1417 he granted £10 a year to his esquire, John Clement, charged to the subsidy and ulnage of Surrey and Sussex, which money was available after the death of William Balne

¹⁰² *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen IV, 1408-1413, p.229 1410 Jan 7.

¹⁰³ *Cal. Close Rolls*, Hen V, 1413-19, p.208 1415 May 28.

¹⁰⁴ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen IV, 1401-1405, p.32 1402 Jan 13; and *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen IV, 1408-1413, p.358 1412 Jan 18; *Cal. Close Rolls*, Hen IV, 1409-13, p.267 1412 Jan 18; *Cal. Close Rolls*, Hen V, 1413-19, pp.143-4 1414 Oct 12; and *Cal. Close Rolls*, Hen VI, 1422-29, p.32 1423 Mar 6. Does the fact that Chadelyche and John de Roche were each granted 100 marks as king's knight suggest that this was the "going rate"? Both knights were paid from the ulnage of Wiltshire, and Henry IV appears to have adopted the scales of payment established by Richard II.

¹⁰⁵ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen IV, 1408-1413, p.455 1412 Dec 1. The recompense was £51 13s 4d, which is not 100 marks but 77.

¹⁰⁶ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen IV, 1413-1416, p.96 1413 Aug 28, to William Halyday, king's servant, minstrel; *Cal. Close Rolls*, Hen V, 1413-1418, p.151 1414 Oct 19, to Thomas Caundisshe and Thomas Newton, serjeants of the king's cellar.

who had been a clerk of his kitchen.¹⁰⁹ In 1417 the annuity which had been granted in 1402 to the late Ralph Pope, was transferred to John Broun a “servant of the king’s chamber”.¹¹⁰

Henry VI's Use Of The Ulnage

Because of the length of Henry VI's reign, it is possible to examine in a more structured way the uses to which he put the income from the ulnage. Amongst his household expenditure, he made grants to his household staff, as had his predecessors. His grants went to both men and women. The male retainers were sometimes granted income from the ulnage directly, and sometimes granted the farm of the ulnage. The latter will be discussed in chapter 3. Henry VI spent some of the revenue on builders, musicians, and hunting dogs. He made grants to other members of the royal family, especially dowager queens, and he continued making payments to the City of Winchester, and to the Priory of Witham Charterhouse at Hinton in Somerset. The ulnage revenues were occasionally caught up in a Parliamentary attempt to control royal expenditure, and in a similar vein were occasionally granted as a way of discharging royal debt, but these uses were exceptional.

Household Officials

Dyer described the heavy commitment the maintenance of a large household laid on the royal income when he wrote “In peace as well as war a high proportion of the lay aristocracy, and especially the gentry, received the fees or annuities associated with ‘bastard feudalism’”.¹¹¹ The ulnage was one of several sources of income with which the king could reward his retainers. That the king’s household servants needed the grants made to them was a fact stated vociferously by themselves. In 1426 Henry VI’s pages and grooms threatened to resign in a body because they were not being paid.¹¹² The ulnage was used by Henry VI to pay a selection of yeomen of the crown, esquires for the body, yeomen of the chamber and serjeants at arms. Some of the recipients had their posts specified in their grants. These include the clerk of the crown of the Chancery, Thomas Haseley, in 1438¹¹³, clerk of the signet, William Crosby, 1444¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ The grant to Balne had been enrolled in the Patent Rolls 1416 Apr 14, and the money was re-allocated to Clement 1417 Feb 9. *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen V, 1416-1422*, p.9; *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen V, 1416-1422*, p.62.

¹¹⁰ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen V, 1416-1422*, p.105 1417 Apr 28.

¹¹¹ Fees paid by a lord to his retainers for professional services. Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1990) p.46.

¹¹² Ralph A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI* (London, 1981) p.53.

¹¹³ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1436-1441*, p.188 1438 Mar 1.

¹¹⁴ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1436-1441*, p.188 1438 Mar 1.

and Master Thomas Lyseux, king's clerk and keeper of the privy seal, in 1453.¹¹⁴ In 1470 John, Bishop of Coventry, was granted £96 13s 4d, as keeper of the Privy Seal, during office.¹¹⁵ This grant was made by Henry VI during his brief restoration, as was the grant of £60 to John Plummer, knight, as keeper of the Great Wardrobe and must therefore be considered abnormal.¹¹⁶

Apart from payments to his own servants, Henry VI made one grant to a member of his mother's household. After her death, her cofferer, Thomas Bateman, was granted £31 14s a year from the revenues of Somerset.¹¹⁷ This grant was to replace other grants held jointly by Bateman and two other men. The grants made to the other two men had been made by Henry IV and Henry V, so it is likely that all three were elderly, and that their grants were being transmuted into pensions, for which the ulnage was a suitable source. There is other evidence of pensions to elderly retainers. In 1451 John Banham, late a master-cook of the household of both Henry V and Henry VI, was granted what must have been a retirement pension.¹¹⁸ In 1461 this was specifically stated to be "on account of his age and blindness".¹¹⁹ Another case of a pension to an aged servitor was that granted to William Pope, in 1444, in compensation for the surrender of other grants and "more than fifty years service to the crown including as bearer of the rod to the knights of the Garter".¹²⁰ This grant suggests a continuity of service by a man who had served Richard II and continued right through into the reign of Henry VI. It gives a glimpse of continuity to the crown as opposed to service to individual kings.

One example of an official who benefited from the ulnage income, having obviously earned recompense, was William Cotom. He had been a clerk of the Great Wardrobe, who was paid from the cloth revenues in 1440. This was a grant for life "in consideration of his having held without fee" for seven years "the office of purveyor of workmen, carriage and materials required

¹¹⁴ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1452-1461*, p.65 1453 Mar 2; p.152 1454 Jan 2. This latter grant partly resulted from a re-arrangement of finances because some of Lyseux's wages had previously come from the income of the Duchy of Cornwall, and the new grant replaced that source of his income.

¹¹⁵ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edu IV, Hen VI, 1467-1477*, p.233 1470 Dec 19.

¹¹⁶ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edu IV, Hen VI, 1467-1477*, p.237-8 1471 Feb 16.

¹¹⁷ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1436-1441*, p.299 1439 July 23, p.364, 1439 Dec 17; *Cal. Close Rolls*, p.227, 1439 Jul 23. If Bateman had served Queen Katherine since her marriage he was probably of advanced years by 1439.

¹¹⁸ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edu IV, 1446-1452*, p.510 1451 Dec 12.

¹¹⁹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edu IV, Hen VI, 1461-1467*, p.78 1461 Dec 10.

¹²⁰ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1441-1446*, p.297 1444 Oct 1. The note in the calendar states that the grant was "vacated because otherwise in this year".

by the said wardrobe". It was agreed that he should be paid the same wages as the Exchequer records showed his predecessors to have had.¹²¹ The Close Rolls showed this sum to have been 6d a day.¹²² A royal servant obviously needed a deep purse, or an excellent credit rating, in order to hold office at court, if he were expected to serve for years at his own expense. Cotom was also granted "of the king's livery of coloured long cloth yearly for the winter and summer seasons". He was either an experienced civil servant, or had taken very sound advice in the drafting of his letters patent. The charge was laid to the income from subsidy, ulnage and moiety of seizure of cloth revenues from London. By attaching it to all parts of the cloth tax income, there was no doubt that there would be sufficient funds to pay him. Furthermore it was to be paid by the hands of "the farmers, approvers or occupiers". This ensured that, whoever was administering the tax collection, his claim on the income could not be denied by a legal technicality. Apart from Cotom, who was a clerk of works, various other construction workers received payment from funds made available by the ulnage. In 1445 William Veysy a brickmaker with responsibility for repairs to the king's manors, was granted wages of 6d a day and £10 per annum.¹²³ In the following year Robert Westerley was granted 12d a day.¹²⁴ He was described as king's serjeant but he was also a mason who was mastermason of the king's works. In 1451 his grant was extended to include his riding costs when on official business and a robe of the suit of king's gentleman yearly.¹²⁵

In 1444 the revenues of Bristol were charged with an annual payment of 40 marks to John Plummer, clerk of the king's chapel "for the exhibition of eight boys, while he has their keeping", and the grant was enrolled in the Patent Rolls. The attachment of this money was confirmed in the Close Rolls two years later.¹²⁶ Whether this charge on the royal income was a new innovation, or whether it was a new way of meeting an established liability, is not apparent.¹²⁷ Prior to this grant, the revenues of Bristol had been committed elsewhere, and by 1456 they were allocated to the Treasurer of the Royal household.¹²⁸ The details of the

¹²¹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1436-1441, p.481 1440 Nov 12.

¹²² *Cal. Close Rolls*, Hen VI, 1435-1441, p.404 1440 Nov 12.

¹²³ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1446-1452, p.365 1445 Jan 12. The attachment is found in *Cal. Close Rolls*, Hen VI, 1441-1447, p.260 1445 Jan 12.

¹²⁴ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1446-1452, p.22 1446 Dec 1.

¹²⁵ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1446-1452, p.500-1 1451 Nov 11.

¹²⁶ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1446-1452, p.311 1444 Nov 4; *Cal. Close Rolls*, Hen VI, 1441-1447, p.341 1446 May 30.

¹²⁷ The use of ulnage income to pay a musician was not new as the grant of £20 13s 4d made by Henry V to the minstrel William Halyday has already been noted, above.

¹²⁸ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1452-1461, p.298 1456 July 21.

Treasurer's expenditure were not shown in the Patent or Close Rolls, so it is not apparent whether he continued to pay this particular grant.

Another expenditure of the fifteenth-century kings of England was on their greyhounds. Presumably, when parliament, in 1353, had granted the ulnage revenues to Edward III, they had understood the trappings of royalty, and the use of the cloth revenues for the maintenance of a pack of dogs would have been regarded as a proper expenditure by a king. The appointment of Walter Strykeland in 1431 was funded from the ulnage. He was a king's esquire, who was appointed master of the king's dogs "called heirers".¹²⁹ Strykeland was appointed following the death of Hugh Malgrave. Since this was the first occasion since 1394 that the revenues of Bedford and Buckingham are mentioned, it is not apparent whether they had previously been allocated to the expenses of these dogs. How long Strykeland continued in office was not shown in the records. In 1448, the Close Rolls showed specific payments for the dogs and their handlers, so it was possible to compare the relative costs of the men and animals needed if the king was to go hare coursing in style.¹³⁰ Nicholas Redyng, who was "the yeoman berner of the office of the king's hounds" was paid "4d a day for his wages and 3¼d for the cost of a horse of the king in his keeping by reason of that office". The relative costs of horse and man make an interesting comparison. Robert Peverell, yeoman berner and Robert Sandford, second yeoman berner were each to receive 2d a day for life as wages as did the two yeoman veauters¹³¹, William Peller and John Tanner. Thus the expenses of these four men were individually considered to be less than those of the yeoman berner's horse. Finally the two grooms "of the said office" each received 1½d a day. These men were responsible for 36 running hounds and nine greyhounds whose costs were set at ¾d each. The wages were probably reasonable by the standards of the time and they continued throughout the fifteenth century.

Thus Henry VI used the ulnage, as had his predecessors, primarily for his household expenses. In particular, he used the money to reward his upper servants, although some payments were made for other reasons. The ulnage could not entirely escape the financial disorder of the later

¹²⁹ This word sounds like "harers" and presumably were used for hare coursing. Some of the dogs were greyhounds and others were described as running hounds. These may have been the greyhound crosses described in modern times as lurchers. Hare coursing might well appeal to a ten-year-old medieval prince, so the maintenance of this expense may not have been purely for show.

¹³⁰ *Cal. Close Rolls, Hen VI, 1447-1454*, p.6 1448 Oct 27.

¹³¹ Veautters were keepers of hounds.

years of his reign, but mostly it was too small a source of revenue to be significantly used as a way of paying pressing creditors.

Edward IV

Finally, the uses Edward IV made of this source of income remain to be considered. Because he came to the throne as a result of rebellion and not of inheritance, he was not necessarily encumbered with the debts and promises of his predecessors. For example, during Henry VI's early years it had been necessary to make provision for two dowager queens: Edward IV had no such commitments. However, he charged the ulnager with a payment of 100s 4d to John Banham on account of his age and blindness.¹³³ This was presumably the same John Banham who had been master cook of Henry VI's household in 1444 and had been granted a pension from the ulnager income in 1451. Thus, although Edward was not committed to Henry's expenses, he did not wholly repudiate them where charity was involved. Indeed, there is nothing about the sort of grants which he made that suggests a change of monarch, and he continued to use the ulnager for the same type of payments as had Henry VI; that is, he was primarily using the ulnager as a source of income out of which to make payments to members of his household staff. In this he was behaving in a way that was typical of the nobility around him, although the ulnager was a particular source of income not available to any but the king.

Christopher Dyer has stated that "By the reign of Edward IV, 600-800 people were on the pay roll of the royal household"¹³⁴. He compared the royal household with that of Henry Percy, third earl of Northumberland, whom he described as being "a politically active magnate". In 1461 Percy was spending as much as a third or a half of his income, which was about £3000, on fees and annuities to his supporters. He was dispensing individual fees of £2 to £10, which were not large in relation to his own income, but were a welcome addition for the recipients whose normal incomes were less than £40 per annum from land. Such payments were also large enough that the recipients would not lightly offend their patron. Some of Percy's payments were "fees to the gentry who provided services as administrators and above all as lawyers"¹³⁵.

¹³³ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw IV, Hen VI, 1461-1467*, p.78 1461 Dec 10.

¹³⁴ Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1990) p.46.

¹³⁵ *ibid.*, p.46

The first four enrolments concerning the ulnage were to two yeomen of the crown, an esquire described as his servitor and the master of the king's dogs.¹³⁴ A new master of dogs was appointed in 1471, when John Audelay, knight, was granted the post.¹³⁵ In 1465 Edward IV granted John Allestre, his servitor, a yeoman of his chamber, payment of 4d daily from the ulnage receipts of Bristol.¹³⁶ He continued to make grants to members of his household, such as a £20 annuity to Thomas Garnet, his servitor, in 1466¹³⁷, and several others.¹³⁸ These grants were all at the sort of rates that had prevailed in Henry VI's reign.

Edward IV also paid for certain construction work with ulnage money. He paid Thomas Jurdane, the rough mason of the king's works, from the income of Suffolk and Essex¹³⁹ Another serjeant with technical responsibility was Richard Garnet, who was pavilioner of the king's tents and pavilions in 1464. Garnet's grant included 12d a day for himself and an allowance of 4d a day for a groom.¹⁴⁰ Edward IV made one grant to a musician, namely to Robert Grene. He had been promised 10 marks a year in 1473 but this had not been paid. In 1475 he had his grant enrolled in both the Patent Rolls and the Close Rolls. His fee of 10 marks a year was made a charge upon the cloth revenue of Oxford and Berkshire.¹⁴¹

In 1461 Edward IV had made of grant of the income from the ulnage and subsidy of Yorkshire and the whole income which arose from the sale of seized cloth. The grant was made to John

¹³⁴ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw IV, Hen VI, 1461-1467*, p.47, and p.49 1461 Nov 2 (twice) Ralph Batson and Richard Craforth; p.63 1461 Sept 6, Thomas Garnet; p.22 1461 July 17, John Wroth. The costs of the pack were exactly as they had been in Henry VI's time.

¹³⁵ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw IV, Hen VI, 1467-1477*, p.266 1471 July 5, and p.444 1474 June 25.

¹³⁶ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw IV, Hen VI, 1461-1467*, p.446 1465 July 11.

¹³⁷ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw IV, Hen VI, 1461-1467*, p.541 1466 Oct 28.

¹³⁸ These grants include those to Richard Asplee, king's serjeant at arms, 12d daily (*Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw IV, Hen VI, 1467-1477*, p.265 1471 July 27).

Robert Brent, a yeoman of the crown, 5d a day, (*Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw IV, Hen VI, 1467-1477*, p.329 1472 Mar 26).

Thomas Danyell, yeoman of the crown, 6d daily (*Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw IV, Hen VI, 1467-1477*, p.570 1475 Mar 12).

Richard Jeny, king's servant, 20 marks per annum, (*Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw IV, Hen VI, Ric III, 1476-1485*, p.135 1479 Jan 24).

Nicholas Suthworth, his servant, 100s, (*Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw IV, Hen VI, Ric III, 1476-1485*, p.316-7 1482 May 10).

Thomas Lye, his serjeant at arms, 12d a day, (*Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw IV, Hen VI, Ric III, 1476-1485*, pp.341-2 1482 June 29).

William Dobbynson, a yeoman of the crown, 6d a day, (*Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw IV, Hen VI, Ric III, 1476-1485*, p.346 1483 Apr 1).

¹³⁹ *Cal. Close Rolls, Edw IV, 1461-68*, p.122 1462 July 23.

¹⁴⁰ *Cal. Close Rolls, Edw IV, 1461-68*, p.224 1464 Oct 26.

¹⁴¹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw IV, Hen VI, 1467-1477*, p.482 1475 Feb 6; *Cal. Close Rolls, Edw IV*, p.342 1475 Feb 8.

Neville, Lord Montagu, described as “his kinsman”.¹⁴² Kinsman or not, this was a commitment of the royal revenue more absolute than anything Henry VI had made with the ulnage revenue. After John’s death, Edward IV granted his widow, Isabel, 200 marks per annum, to be paid from certain specified ulnage income during the minority of George, their son.¹⁴³ Thus the one grant of the ulnage income that Edward IV made to a woman was for the provision of her son. Apart from this isolated instance, Edward IV made no grants to women from the ulnage. However he maintained the payments to the Prior of the Witham Charterhouse and to the City of Winchester.

Although, in 1474, Edward IV, granted all the ulnage receipts yearly to John Elryngton, the treasurer of the king’s household, until the king’s debts were paid,¹⁴⁴ it seems likely that Elryngton was responsible for honouring pre-determined commitments and had little choice in the disposition of the moneys. Moreover the approvers continued to be responsible for the payments. The ulnage roll records that include the Hampshire ulnage returns for 1474-76¹⁴⁵ and 1476-78 show the approver both collecting and paying out the money.¹⁴⁶ As had been the case when Henry VI’s affairs had been put into the hands of his treasurer, this event was followed by an absence of enrolments in the Close Rolls, attaching money to pay grants. Presumably, either the treasurer paid the money, or the creditors abandoned hope.

Richard III

Richard III did not reign long enough for it to be possible to see how he planned to use the ulnage income. The few items which were enrolled during his reign show no departure from the pattern established by Henry VI and Edward IV.

Women

A few women are mentioned as recipients of money from the ulnage, although, prior to 1446, only one, Blanche Chalouns, was not a queen. In 1446 Sybil Haukeston was granted £20 a

¹⁴² *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw. IV, Hen VI, 1461-1467*, p.130 1461 July 18.

¹⁴³ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw. IV, Hen VI, 1467-1477*, p.335, 1472 Mar 19.

¹⁴⁴ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw. IV, Hen VI, 1467-1477*, p.477-8 1474 Dec 8.

¹⁴⁵ E 358/9 mm 49r, 50r.

¹⁴⁶ Two examples of the financial problems of the king are that in 1475, the minstrel Robert Grene had needed to petition twice for arrears due to him, and in 1476 John Barker of London, a goldsmith was promised two single payments from the ulnage receipts. This was because revenue which had been promised had not been delivered to him and in consequence he had been unable to offer tallies.

year.¹⁴⁷ In the same year John Say and Elizabeth Tilney the elder, 'whom he will marry' were granted £32 10s a year in survivorship.¹⁴⁸ Say was a king's serjeant and yeoman of his chamber. It is possible that Elizabeth Tilney also served at court. Certainly Margaret Fastold and Alice Bartlot were attendants at court, for their grant of 10 marks per annum in survivorship was "for good service to the queen".¹⁴⁹ The only other non-royal woman mentioned in grants set against the ulnage during Henry VI's reign was Alice Passelawe, the wife of John Passelawe, who was described as a citizen and grocer of London. She and her husband were jointly granted £20 per annum in survivorship, but the reason is not stated.¹⁵⁰

The other women who received income from the ulnage were the dowager queens, Joan, widow of Henry IV, and Katherine, widow of Henry V. Henry V had made a substantial charge on the ulnage as part of a very large settlement made to Joan, the widowed queen consort of Henry IV in 1414.¹⁵¹ Similarly, in the early years of the reign of Henry VI, substantial charges were levied on the ulnage for the benefit of Henry V's widow, Katherine, the Queen Mother.¹⁵²

Nobility

As has been stated, the ulnage was not generally used to source grants to members of the nobility, although there were some exceptions. One exception was made by Henry VI in 1443 when there was a complicated settlement for the benefit of John, Duke of Somerset which included various charges on the ulnage.¹⁵³ There is an obvious reason for the grant of 113 marks, which was made to Leo, Lord Welles, late lieutenant of Ireland in 1442. These payments, to be taken from the ulnage income of Yorkshire, were to continue until a debt of '£2000 and more' had been paid.¹⁵⁴ The grant made to James, Earl of Douglas, in 1457 was part of a larger settlement made to compensate him for his possessions, which had been confiscated by the Scottish king. Recompense to the Douglasses was clearly a widely accepted commitment,

¹⁴⁷ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1441-1446, p.440 1446 June 1.

¹⁴⁸ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1446-1452, p.23 1446 Nov 11.

¹⁴⁹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1441-1446, p.59 1447 Feb 1.

¹⁵⁰ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1452-1461, p.110 1452 July 9.

¹⁵¹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen V, 1413-1416, pp.164-6 1414 Jan 27.

¹⁵² *Cal. Close Rolls*, Hen VI, 1422-29, p.21 1423 Oct 23, repeated in 1434. See also *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1429-36, p.294 1433 July 8.

¹⁵³ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1441-1446, p.224 1443 Sept 25. Edmund Duke of Somerset became a farmer of the ulnage in 1451, but this was an unusual way for a Duke to behave.

¹⁵⁴ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1441-1446, p.100 1442 Apr 27. It would have taken more than 26 years at this rate, for £2000 to have been paid.

because in 1462, Edward IV made provision for James's brother John, also in part out of the ulnage income.¹⁵⁵

City of Winchester

Although many grants were made for the immediate and obvious benefit of the royal household, there were exceptions. One such payment from the ulnage income was that made to the City of Winchester; this was a commitment made for a period of years and periodically renewed. The City first received a grant from the ulnage towards the upkeep of its walls in 1369.¹⁵⁶ This grant lasted five years as did a similar one in 1389. A further grant was enrolled in 1393.¹⁵⁷ This grant failed in 1394, when farming was ended. It was replaced in 1397 when new letters patent were issued which overcame this difficulty with the money being a charge on the ulnage of Winchester.¹⁵⁸ This grant also lasted for five years only. The charge on the ulnage may not have been renewed, because from time to time, the mayor and corporation of the City were empowered to make other arrangements to raise funds for the upkeep of the walls.¹⁵⁹

In 1413, Henry IV granted 40 marks, to Father John Tylle [or Tylee] his confessor.¹⁶⁰ This was charged upon the cloth revenues of Hampshire, the farm of which stood at £30. Therefore the revenues were not sufficient to pay Tylle and contribute towards the upkeep of the City walls. In 1415, payment of Tylle's grant was accepted as a continuing liability by Henry V,¹⁶¹ as it was by Henry VI, or rather his guardians, who confirmed the grant to John Tylle.¹⁶² This grant was attached in 1427.¹⁶³ In 1441, after Tylle's death, a grant of 40 marks a year for fifty years was made to the mayor and commonalty of Winchester.¹⁶⁴ That grant was interesting because it specifically stated that the City held the farm of the ulnage for Winchester and Hampshire. From time to time the grant was renewed, for example, in 1451, it was re-issued for a new period

¹⁵⁵ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edu IV, Hen VI, 1461-1467*, pp.105, 115, 1462 Feb 16. (The grant was enrolled twice.)

¹⁵⁶ Hilary L. Turner, *Town Defences in England and Wales* (London, 1971) p.183. Turner stated that Winchester had been required to keep the walls in repair during much of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

¹⁵⁷ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Ric II, 1391-1396*, p.332 1393 Aug 18.

¹⁵⁸ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Ric II, 1396-1399*, p.73 1397 Feb 16.

¹⁵⁹ Hilary L. Turner, *Town Defences in England and Wales* (London, 1971) p.183.

¹⁶⁰ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen IV, 1408-1413*, p.452 1413 Jan 4.

¹⁶¹ *Cal. Close Rolls, Hen V, 1413-19*, pp.242-3 1415 Nov 24.

¹⁶² *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1422-1429*, p.22 1422 Dec 15.

¹⁶³ *Cal. Close Rolls, Hen VI, 1422-29*, p.298 1427 May 20.

¹⁶⁴ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1436-1441*, p.507 1441 Feb 13.

of fifty years.¹⁶⁷ The only time when payment of the grant appeared again to be at risk was in 1474, when £20 of the revenues from Hampshire, with many other sources of income, were granted to John Elryngton, treasurer of the king's household.¹⁶⁸ The income from Hampshire at that time was of the order of £27 and it is always possible that Elryngton continued to make payments to Winchester.

Prior and Convent of Witham Charterhouse, Somerset

Another long term commitment honoured by Richard II, and by his successors, was an obligation to provide a sum of 50 marks annually to the prior and convent of the Witham Charterhouse in Hinton, Somerset.¹⁶⁹ At one stage the monks were paid by Walter, Lord Hungerford who, in 1438, was paid 100 marks, from the ulnage income, for attendance on the king's Council but out of which money he also had to pay the 50 marks to the Priory.¹⁷⁰ This is an atypical use of the ulnage moneys. Hungerford had a status above that of the household servants who were paid by the ulnage. Furthermore, the requirement that he pay the monks of Hinton suggests that the grant was not solely, if at all, in the nature of a payment for his personal benefit. It is not apparent why one section of the ulnage income should be dispersed in this way as there does not appear to be any other similar application.

Royal Debt

Mostly the cloth revenues were kept separate from the overall alarums of royal financing and were granted in a fairly orderly way, and in a way which suggested that the recipients of grants were likely to be paid, even if they had to obtain an attachment of the income and enroll it in the Close Rolls. There were a few occasions when the ulnage income was used in the struggle to meet the king's more pressing debts. In 1456 the financial difficulties of Henry VI engulfed the ulnage as well as everything else, and the revenues were paid to John Brekenok esquire, the treasurer of the household, for the expenses thereof.¹⁷¹ It is always possible that he continued to pay against the various letters patent, but through a central accounting point. Certainly, this

¹⁶⁷ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1446-1452*, p.512 1451 Feb 1.

¹⁶⁸ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edu, IV, Hen VI, 1467-1485*, pp.447-8 1474 Dec 8.

¹⁶⁹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edu, IV, Hen VI, 1461-67*, pp.127-8 1461 July 20, for example. The reason for this commitment was explained in the letters patent of 1461 July 20. It would appear that the house in Savoy had lent 700 marks to the house in Somerset. Repaying this debt took up nearly all the income of the Somerset house, and they were totally dependent on the 50 marks a year to live on. Henry VI had borrowed 700 marks and paid the house in Savoy on their behalf. They surrendered their letters patent, but without that income "divine service cannot there be maintained". Therefore their grant income was restored to them by Edward IV, in part from the ulnage revenues. Richard III also accepted liability towards this house. The original grant had been made by Henry II and had been honoured by most kings since. (*Cal. Close Rolls, Ric III, 1476-85*, p.313 1484 Feb 16).

¹⁷⁰ The first grant to Lord Hungerford was enrolled in 1438. *Cal Pat Rolls, Hen VI, 1436-1441*, p.144, 1438 Mar 20. The requirement to pay the Priory is apparent from an entry in the Close Rolls. *Cal Close Rolls, Hen VI*, p.249, 1444 Nov 8.

diversion of income was not followed by a spate of attachments in the Close Rolls from unsatisfied creditors, so the chances are that they were paid. However, this administration by the treasurer is an instance of other difficulties impinging on the ulnage, rather than a problem that was intrinsic to the ulnage itself. Another occasion when the ulnage income was used to meet the king's debts arose in 1459, when a group, mostly comprising merchants of Bristol, was granted re-payment of a loan of £2000, partly from ulnage income.¹⁶⁹

Discussion

In conclusion, the most noticeable fact about the ulnage revenue is how small it was. It is rightly classed as a minor tax in the fifteenth century. Probably because the ulnage was a small tax, it seems largely to have escaped the fate which all too often overcame the customs receipts. Thus it was not often used as security against royal indebtedness, nor was it used in other financial speculation. The occasional spectacular speculations which engulfed the customs are not seen in the affairs of the ulnage. If ulnagers borrowed money in order to become farmers, their affairs were petty rather than dramatic. No one person, or syndicate, gained control of large swathes of the ulnage, although the approvers narrowed the administrative base to regions of England rather than the more normal county level, or pairs of counties. This lack of monopoly holding probably arose because the amount of revenue was too insubstantial to attract financiers interested in national control. One essential difference between customs and ulnage was that no evidence of malpractice would remain once uncustomed goods had been exported, whereas unsealed cloths for sale would be apparent for all to see: ulnage fraud could most easily be committed by sealing cloths that were not entitled to be sealed.

Despite its smallness in the overall revenues of the nation, the ulnage mattered sufficiently to those who had to pay it that Parliament from time to time refined the law and clarified liability. A study of the income enables the main foci of the broadcloth industry to be established, and for changes of focus to be noted. The changes in farm fees give a coarse picture of the change in the volume of output which can be related to other economic events of the century. Fine distinctions cannot be made and the ulnage farms cannot form the basis as a sensitive measure of changes in production, although it allows counties to be compared with each other. There were some changes in amounts of farm fee which vary from the normal and may therefore be

¹⁶⁹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1452-1461*, p.511 1459 Aug 26. The creditors were John Stourton of Stourton knight, Richard Chok king's serjeant at law, William Canynge of Bristol merchant, William Coder of Bristol merchant, Philip Mede of Bristol merchant, John Eyton of Bristol merchant.

driven by changes in production, and a study of the county or region concerned might show more light on such figures.

The use of the income from the ulnage, which has not been discussed by other historians, except *en passant*, gives an insight into the household expenditure of the king. It sheds light on the payments made to his upper servants, and what sort of remuneration was considered appropriate. These are the men who were essential to the running of the royal household rather than to affairs of state. As such their names rarely appear in history books, and it is only by studying the by-ways of the documents that they come into focus. The examination of the enrolled items also reveals a few charitable payments to old or disabled retainers. Sometimes the money was used to pay members of the royal family, but this was the exception rather than the rule. The payments to the Priory of the Witham Charterhouse and to the City of Winchester are entirely anomalous and do not form part of the normal pattern of ulnage expenditure. The money from the ulnage appears to have been a useful adjunct to hard pressed monarchs, but no more than that, and as such was only occasionally swept into grand plans to control royal expenditure.

Chapter 3 National Administration

One of the aspects of the ulnage records that has not been addressed elsewhere is the light they shed on fifteenth-century administration. This chapter sets out to examine how the ulnage was administered by central government. The local officials who were responsible for collecting the ulnage always had to answer to the Exchequer. The detailed control of the administration of the ulnage lay with the clerks of central government, in that they undertook the administration in connection with the appointments of officials, laid down their duties within the constraints of the law, audited their returns and exercised general supervision.

Types of Office

During the period under review, three different classes of official were employed to take responsibility for the ulnage. They were the directly employed ulnagers, the farmers and the approvers. The directly employed ulnagers were hired by the Exchequer. They were required to account for all the money that they collected, and were remunerated "at the discretion" of the Exchequer. The farmers contracted for the right to administer the ulnage within their given area. They paid an agreed annual sum to the Exchequer, usually in two instalments, but were not accountable for the revenue that they collected. The approvers were required to account for all the revenue they collected and were directly employed by the Exchequer where their remuneration was decided. There was one major difference in role between the approvers and the other two types of officials. The approvers were required to disburse the money they had collected to the appointed recipients, and then include an account of such payments in their annual returns to the Exchequer.¹ There is some evidence that the other types of official sometimes paid money directly to the recipients but this was as an administrative convenience, rather than being an integral part of their role. Both farmers and approvers were required to find mainpernors to stand as sureties. This was not normally required of directly appointed ulnagers.

¹ The existence of this practice raises some unanswered questions about the relationships between Edward IV and his Exchequer. It seems unlikely that the Exchequer would have been sanguine about the loss of direct control of a fundamental revenue task, namely the payment of grants. Furthermore, the collection and payment of money by a single official destroys a basic revenue accounting tenet in which assessments, payments and accounting functions are kept separate. If a single official was carrying out all three roles and then paying the money out as well, the scope for central control, or any other external control, was severely reduced. It may be that in the difficult years of the 1460s and 1470s, that this scheme was devised as a way of taking pressure off the senior civil servants, thus freeing them to attend to other matters, such as arranging loans for the king. (see A. Steel, *The Receipt of the Exchequer 1377-1485*, (Cambridge, 1954) p.346).

The three forms of appointment are similar to the three forms of appointment used when administering land, and this tax was managed in much the same way as the rest of the royal estate. The directly-appointed ulnager was equivalent to the estate manager employed when land was held in demesne. By the fifteenth century, farming, or leasing estates for a fixed rent was not uncommon, and by the 1460s the use of approvers was found, certainly in the administration of the royal estate. Approvers were directly employed; they were not farming their areas of responsibility, but they tended to have oversight of a substantial area, rather than being responsible for single estates, as might be the case with bailiffs and reeves. For example, Nicholas Leventhorpe² was an experienced estate manager who was appointed to be approver of the ulnage for Yorkshire between 1475 and 1478.³

Although he was not the first to use approvers in connection with the ulnage, it seems likely that the change to approvers in the 1460s arose from Edward IV's desire to make the collection and husbanding of royal revenues more efficient. He had re-organised the royal landed estate and replaced farmers with managers who took direct control and he then sought to use a similar approach with the ulnage. However, with his landed estates, Edward IV had his officials report directly to his chamber within the royal household.⁴ The approvers' returns continued to be enrolled on the Ulnage Rolls, which suggests that their returns continued to be made to the Exchequer; so the parallel is not exact.

Terms of Appointment

From 1394 onwards, it was normal for the administrators of the ulnage to have their appointments confirmed by letters patent. These were drawn up in the Chancery, and most of them were enrolled in the Fine Rolls. This was achieved by the enrolment of a bill of the treasurer, and most appointments in respect of the ulnage were made by the treasurer. There were a few exceptions, inevitably. For example, between 1417 and 1420 the bills were issued by the deputy treasurer,⁵ and in November 1420 by the treasurer on the advice of the Barons of the Exchequer.⁶ From late 1421 the appointments were again made by the treasurer on his own

² Charles Ross, *Edward IV* (London, 1974) p.374.

³ *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, pp.105-6 1475 Nov July 30.

⁴ Charles Ross, *Edward IV* (London, 1974) p.374.

⁵ See, for example, *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV, 1413-1422*, p.278 1419 June 9.

⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV, 1413-1422*, p.394 1421 Nov 7.

authority. This practice continued until 1439 when the first example⁷ of an appointment being made under the privy seal occurred. (1439 was soon after Henry VI achieved his majority and was personally exercising the royal prerogative.) The next time the privy seal was used was in early 1442, when it was used “by the authority of Parliament”.⁸ Some of the appointments in 1442 were made under the privy seal and others by the treasurer, also acting “by the authority of Parliament”.⁹ Overt royal interventions, by Henry VI, occurred from time to time but never became the normal manner of appointment. In 1453 the farm of Salisbury and Wiltshire was granted by the king himself,¹⁰ as was a joint grant of Wiltshire and Bristol made in 1459.¹¹ A few other grants under the privy seal of Henry VI are met with. Neither Edward IV nor Richard III participated in the appointment processes to the extent that they appointed the officials directly, whatever influence they may have brought to bear behind the scenes. Thus the evidence suggests that the control of the administration of this minor tax lay in the hands of the treasurer and his civil servants who seem to have controlled it reasonably well. Serious problems with the appointment system only arose when Henry VI intervened personally, as will be shown later. It may be that the king’s behaviour gave rise to the Statute determining who might grant office, which was passed in 1452. This statute decreed that letters patent for the ulnage could only be made by Bill of the Treasurer, and that all others were illegal.¹²

As has been stated, ulnagers had to be appointed anew for the whole country after the new legislation of 1394. Many of them were appointed on 20 July 1394.¹³ Appointments were made which between them covered the whole country, save only the counties of the Duchy of Lancaster which undertook its own administration.¹⁴ The terms upon which the ulnagers were appointed varied with time. The common theme was that the law within which they were to act was always recited, and much of this recital was taken up with a listing of which cloths could, or

⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XV/II, 1437-1445*, p.155 1439 Dec. 21.

⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XV/II, 1437-1445*, for example p.230 1442 Jan 25.

⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XV/II, 1437-1445*, for example p.259 1443 May 18.

¹⁰ *Cal. Fine Rolls XV/III, 1445-1452*, p.12 1453 June 17.

¹¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.219 1459 Aug 26.

¹² *Stat. Realm 2*, 31 Hen VI cap.5.

¹³ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XI, 1391-1399, pp.122-4 1394 July 20. For example, the appointment of William Elys of Canterbury stated that the king had appointed him “as his ulnager in the County of Kent, to measure in person or by deputy all cloths and pieces of cloth for sale in the said County before they are sold or exposed for sale or taken out of the County, seal the same with the seal appointed for ulnage, levy and collect from the seller the moneys forthcoming from such ulnage, and also the subsidy aforesaid, in respect of all cloths and pieces of cloth so measured and sealed”.

¹⁴ The administration of the ulnage within the Duchy was undertaken and is referred to, albeit briefly, in the history of the Duchy. (See Robert Somerville *History of the Duchy of Lancaster Volume One 1265-1603*, (London, 1953) p314, p342)

could not be taxed, how it was to be measured, and the rate of taxation. Nonetheless, part of the grant always described the responsibilities of the appointee, and as is the way of officialdom, these grants grew longer with time. That of July 1394 occupies a little more than a page in the Calendar of Fine Rolls,¹⁵ that of 1438 occupies one and a half pages,¹⁶ while that of July 1465 occupies more than three pages.¹⁷ The first of these grants recited the law which said that all cloths which were taxable had to be taxed before they might be offered for sale, or they were forfeit to the king. Any such cloths were to be taken into the king's hand by the collector of the subsidy or the ulnager, or their deputies, or by the town or county officials. Appointments to the posts of collector of the subsidy and that of ulnager were described separately, although they were granted together. They were two separate duties, but it was administratively convenient for one person to undertake both.

The terms of the appointment continued by empowering the ulnager to take steps to deal with evasion, as well as outlining his responsibility to account at the Exchequer. In the 1390s it was not stipulated when the account was to be rendered, and the Hampshire and Winchester accounts are for varying, and different lengths of time. A preventive measure was included in the grant and the ulnager was required to "cause proclamation to be made that no denizen or alien expose for sale or take out of the county any cloths or pieces of cloth until the ulnage money and subsidy have been paid and the cloths ... have been sealed"¹⁸. Not only were such proclamations to be made but the ulnager had to seek out possible transgressions. He had to

search all houses, shops and other places in the county where such cloths and pieces of cloth for sale can be found, take into the king's hand as forfeit all unsealed cloths exposed for sale, sell them by indenture by survey of the sheriff of the county, answer at the Exchequer for the moneys forthcoming, and arrest and commit to prison until further order all who are rebellious in the matter.¹⁹

This power of search is one of those which gave the ulnager an advantage over the medieval customs officer in the pursuit of evasion. The customs officer had one chance, at the port, to detect smuggled goods before they left the port area. The ulnager was empowered to go to store

¹⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI, 1391-1399*, pp.122-4 1394 July 20.

¹⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls XVII, 1437-1445*, p.35-6 1438 Feb 14.

¹⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XV, 1461-1471*, pp.154-7 1465 July 29.

¹⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI, 1391-1399*, p.123, 1394 July 20.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.123.

houses, manufacturing places or places of sale to see what was stored or under production, in order to determine what was taxable or likely to become taxable.²⁰

A major change in the terms of appointment was made in 1403 when Parliament once more declared farming the ulnage to be lawful. Indeed the statute went further and stated that the abolition of farming had been to "the great damage of the king yearly". It further stated that

the said aulnage may be set to ferm according to the discretion of the Treasurer of England for the time being, and of the Barons of the Exchequer, notwithstanding the said statute made to the contrary.²¹

As surety, the farmers were required to have mainpernors.²² It was customary for farmers to have two mainpernors, but sometimes larger syndicates gave mainprise. The mainpernors acted for all the parties named in a grant. Even if the farm was being granted to more than one person, only one set of mainpernors was required. An early example of the mainprise in connection with the ulnage is to be found in the 1403 appointment of Simon Blakebourne, the king's sergeant-at-arms, to the farm of the ulnage of Surrey and Sussex.²³ Blakebourne had two mainpernors to act as his guarantors, namely Christopher Tildesley of London, goldsmith, and John Stapelton of Sussex. The requirement to find mainprise was laid upon approvers in due course.

Unlike the previous appointments, farms were for fixed periods of time, and Blakebourne's was for two years. He agreed to pay £17 6s 8d per annum, in two instalments. In exchange the king granted him the revenue from the subsidy and ulnage. He also appointed Blakebourne to "measure, in person or by deputy, all cloths and pieces of cloth for sale in the said counties before they are exposed for sale". The powers of search and seizure were granted, but the power of arrest was not part of this appointment, nor was the requirement to publicise the law by proclamation. The other difference, in terms of appointment, was that the value of any cloth seized was to be split, so that the ulnager kept half and the other half only was sent to the king.

²⁰ A modern example of this practice can be seen in the activities of the Excise officers who are empowered to search premises where they think illicit distilling may be carried on.

²¹ *Stat. Realm 2*, (London, 1816) p.140

²² Legally "mainprise is taking a person into friendly custody by one who gives security that he shall be produced at a certain time and place. A person of bail was regarded in a much more serious light. Instead of being in charge of a friend he was liable to be put in prison at any time and was always under the eyes of the law." H.W. Gidden ed., *The Book of Remembrance of Southampton II, 1303-1518*, (Southampton, 1928) p.59 n.4.

²³ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, p.232 1403 Oct 14.

This innovation remained throughout the period, at least till 1485, but generally it related to farmers and not to directly employed ulnagers. Thus, when an ulnager was appointed for Leicester in December 1404, his terms of appointment were similar to those of William Elys in 1394.²² He had to remit all the value of any seized cloth, he had to make proclamation, and he had powers of arrest. The implications of this are that ulnagers were seen as part of the county administration, as minor officials answerable to the sheriffs and therefore with some of the powers proper to sheriffs' officers, whereas farmers were not part of the county administration and could not properly be given such power. The differing powers given to the two different types of appointee were not co-incidence because other appointments of ulnagers made within a year or two, followed the same pattern as these two, according to which type of appointment was involved.

In earlier periods, seized cloth that was forfeit to the king, had literally been sent to the king. From 1394, the grants of office instructed that such cloths should be sold and the value forwarded. In 1408 an exceptional reversion to the earlier pattern was found in the appointment of John Mountagu to the farm of Wiltshire.²³ In this grant, which followed a change in the law, the ulnager was directed that where cloths were not of standard measure he was "to take the said cloths and deliver them to the Wardrobe to the king's use". This was in addition to any unsealed cloths offered for sale and liable to forfeiture. These were to be seized and sold in the normal way, with the money thus generated to be shared equally between the king and the ulnager. The reason for this clause is not apparent, nor does it appear to be repeated in other grants.

The general change to approvers followed legislation in 1464. The appointment of approvers followed concern, which was expressed in Parliament, about the administration of the ulnage. Regulations concerning the length, breath and quality of broadcloth were laid down and it was decreed that there should be an "adequate staff of ulnagers accounting regularly at the Exchequer".²⁴ The legislation required the Treasurer to appoint officials called "keepers of the seals or aulnagers". The word "approver" is not found in the legislation on cloth and the ulnage although what happened in practice was that the Treasurer appointed approvers, who appointed ulnagers to answer to themselves. Another difference between approvers and farmers is that farms were let for fixed terms of years, whereas the appointment of approvers was "during

²² *Cal. Fine Rolls XI, 1391-99*, p.122-4 1394 July 20.

²³ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIII, 1405-1413*, p.105-6 1408 Mar 5.

²⁴ E.F. Jacob, *The Fifteenth Century 1399-1485* (Oxford, 1961) p.544.

pleasure". The grants required the account to be rendered annually. They did not require the money to be submitted half yearly as the farmers were required to do, nor did they give any indication how the approvers were to be recompensed. The enrolled grant only appears to tell half the story.²⁵ The terms must have been satisfactory, because Edward Langford and John Bethom, on the same day, were appointed as approvers in Oxfordshire and Berkshire, and in Wiltshire,²⁶ and soon after they were appointed in Hampshire.²⁷ Initially, the change did not seem to be significant. The letters patent appointed them as

approvers of the subsidy and ulnage of cloths for sale in the County of Southampton and in the City, suburbs and soke of Winchester; to hold from Michaelmas last during pleasure, together with a moiety of the forfeiture of the said cloths for sale, rendering account yearly at the Exchequer, as the order of the account requires. And further the king has appointed the said Edward and John as ulnagers and collectors.²⁸

Yet another difference was that the approvers, besides accounting for the income from the cloth charges, were often responsible for disbursing the money, and some of their returns included the list of payments as well as summaries of receipts. The returns therefore not only listed where the money had come from, but also what had been done with it. If there was a surplus at the end of the period, then that would be remitted to the Exchequer. The earlier appointments of approvers required them to account yearly at the Exchequer, although during part of the 1470s Richard More was submitting returns biennially. After the approvers had been abolished by Parliament, in 1478, the ulnage was again farmed. The annual farm fees were paid in two instalments to the Exchequer, although the formal returns were sent in annually.

The change to administration by approvers can be seen clearly in the appointment of John Fortho in 1465 to the approvership of London.²⁹ The appointment has been set out in detail in the Fine Rolls, and is a source of detailed information about the role of the approvers in respect of the ulnage.³⁰ The terms and conditions laid down show very clearly that the

²⁵ Chope says that the approvers were salaried officials. He concluded that the revenue dropped under the approvers because the emphasis of their duties was on regulating size and quality of cloth rather than on collection of revenue. See R. Pearce Chope "The Aulnager in Devon" *Transactions of the Devon Association* 44 (1912) p.589.

²⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.140 1464 Jan 14, *ibid.*

²⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.140, 1464 Jan 14.

²⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.140 1464 Jan 14.

²⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, pp.154-7 1465 July 29.

³⁰ *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, pp.154-7, 1465 July 29.

Exchequer was to be in control of the whole operation. The letters patent cited the new legislation which had recently been enacted in the Parliament of January 1464. They rehearsed the usual requirements relating to the length of cloth, and the prohibition on joining pieces together, and then forbade the use of certain types of wool, except in specified conditions. There was a further minor amendment to the basic conditions of appointment, which was made from 1465. From that date, ulnagers, of whatever 'type' were required to show their commission of office "to any person desiring the same upon the sealing or measuring of any of the cloths aforesaid."³³ In 1464 an Act of Parliament was passed which dealt extensively with the measurement of cloth and the duties of the ulnagers.³⁴ There is reference therein to the 'keepers of the seals' and their duties to account annually to the Exchequer. It appears that the 'keepers of seals' were appointed as approvers and were responsible for the local administration of the ulnage.

Appointments

The letters patent, the instruments by which an appointment to office was made, were drawn up in the Chancery. Changes of sovereign, or a major administrative change involving the appointment (or re-appointment) of a substantial number of people, must therefore have been a busy time for the Chancery clerks. J.L. Kirby formed the opinion that Henry IV re-appointed many of the officials who had served Richard II, and that therefore the change of king did not bring any great pressure of work to the Exchequer clerks.³⁵ This was not true of the ulnage where every county, or county group, had its officers appointed anew, and, because of a drafting error, many of them needed two sets of letters patent, in October and then in November. Thus whatever else may have been true, the ulnage generated a substantial amount of work. Kirby remarked that the Exchequer was not very busy although

some feudal revenues and customs collections were paid in, but there had been no special grant of taxation ... The whole administration in fact continued as usual apparently unmoved by the change of king.³⁶

This may have been generally the case but there was a flurry of activity in regard to the ulnage. Twenty five new ulnagers were appointed in October or November 1399. Although sixteen had

³³ Members of the public can still require Customs and Excise officers to show their Commissions when they are carrying out their duties, particularly in the event of work which may lead to legal proceedings.

³⁴ *Stat. Realm* 2 pp403-406 4 Edw cap.1.

³⁵ J.L. Kirby, *Henry IV of England* (London, 1970) p.84-5.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.84-5

held office under Richard II, several of them had been appointed for the first time earlier in that year. Because the appointments were drawn up by the clerks of the Chancery and not those of the Exchequer, it is in Chancery where any pressure would have been felt in 1399, with the need to appoint ulnagers on two or three occasions during the year.

Care was needed in the drafting of letters patent in connection with the ulnage, as with other matters. The grants were legal documents, so it was important that they were precisely worded and the basic duties of the ulnagers were not misquoted. It was important that farmers were appointed to administer “the farm of the subsidy and ulnage of cloths for sale ... together with a moiety of the forfeiture of the said cloths for sale”.³⁴ They would have been unable to function properly if they had not been appointed to deal with the subsidy, the ulnage and the forfeiture of cloths. The clerks who drew up the letters patent did not make mistakes relating to the fundamental powers of the official because the form of words was so well used, and was taken from Statute, although other errors occasionally crept in.

If a clause was omitted, and then found to be needed, it was necessary to surrender the original letters patent and for new ones to be issued. John Maunche was involved in just such a case, with his partner John Whittokesmede. They had been granted the farm of the County of Wiltshire on 26 June 1451.³⁵ Two years later they surrendered their letters patent and new ones were granted.³⁶ Their new letters showed “that divers assignments of payments to be made from the said farm to divers persons have been made by the king and levied upon them”. They had promised to make such payments as the profits of the farm permitted, but they argued that they could not be held responsible for these liabilities if they were to be subjected to competition from competitive tendering, although no one had offered an increment in the farm during the last two years.³⁷ This manoeuvre may have contained a pre-emptive element that did not relate to removing over-commitment of the income. The primary intention of Maunche and Whittokesmede may have been to preclude a bid from a rival for the farm.³⁸

³⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls XVII, 1437-1445* pp.35-6 1438 Feb 14, for example.

³⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XVI/III, 1445-1452*, p.193 1450 June 26.

³⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.12 1453 June 17.

³⁷ What is not apparent is whether the payments were to be made out of the farm fee, or whether the king had laid a charge on the profits of the farm after the rent had been paid. The entry in the rolls reads as though that was the case, which would through a very different light on the role of the ulnager.

³⁸ Letters patent for Thomas Waryn were enrolled in the Fine Rolls on 18 July 1453 in respect of Wiltshire. It is not obvious whether Waryn took up his office, but Maunche and Whittokesmede were back with a much higher bid and this was enrolled in the Fine Rolls on 9 May 1454. (*Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.10; p.63).

Overall there are about 49 grants which were clearly inoperable although they were enrolled. Most of them were the letters patent of the bids that were overtaken by higher bids when farming was competitive. A few were set aside because of drafting errors and one or two because of changes of territory; and finally there were the enrolments that duplicated grants already recorded. There were 18 grants that were set aside between 1451 and 1455 because they were overtaken by higher bids. Apart from this group, most of the errors, including enrolment of bids where competitive tendering was the cause, were clustered around times of change. Presumably in more settled times, duplication and misunderstandings were eliminated before the letters patent were issued or enrolled. For example, there were three redundant grants in 1403 and 1404, when direct ulnagers were being replaced by farmers. There was a cluster of seven between late 1460 to 1462 when the Chancery clerks were having to deal with the accession of a new king. The last cluster of seven is to be found between 1471 and 1472, when again the clerks were having to deal with new appointments following a very disturbed period of changing monarchs. Bearing in mind the smallness of the ulnage and the many other appointments to be dealt with, the administration worked surprisingly well, and was probably controlled by the keeping of some sort of register or master list.

By 1422 annuities were frequently granted from the ulnage income, and the farmers were being indemnified from having to pay the whole farm and the annuity. For example, the farm granted to William Ryman in respect of Kent contained a clause for "proviso that allowance be made in the payment of the farm in respect of any annuities granted or hereafter to be granted from the said subsidy and ulnage or from the farm of the same".³⁹ This clause was one which was inserted into many later grants. As is so often the case with legal documents, once a problem has been perceived, the solution, or avoiding clause, is inserted into many subsequent documents, and the ulnage grants were no exception to this practice. For example, Henry Banaster, in his grant for Yorkshire, had a clause making proviso "that he have allowance in respect of any grant or annuity made heretofore by the king to any person from the said farm".⁴⁰ His successors retained the clause.

Letters patent were usually issued within months of an ulnager taking up his post, but sometimes they were issued a year or more later. There were no cases of them being issued more than a

³⁹ *Cal Fine Rolls XIV*, 1413-1422, p.432 1422 June 21.

⁴⁰ *Cal Fine Rolls XV*, 1445-1452, p.49 1447 July 2.

few months before they were to take effect. An examination of the appointments for Dorset show that of the 33 appointments made relating to Dorset, only 4 were enrolled before the official took up his post. Six had letters patent dated the same day as their office commenced, leaving 23 who were issued with their appointments after the office had become effective. In many cases this may have come about because the letters patent were issued as a confirmation of an appointment already made and agreed. Of the 23 issued retrospectively, 20 were enrolled within three months of the appointment. Thus, in most cases, the appointee was known from the commencement of his period of office and could make arrangements to receive the revenues and for the measuring and sealing of cloths. This clarity cannot have existed in Dorset and Somerset between Michaelmas 1461 and May 1462, for the definitive appointment was not made until May 1462, although it was backdated to Michaelmas 1461. At this time, the Dorset was farmed jointly with Somerset, at an annual fee slightly in excess of £100. The office was obviously keenly sought after, for four sets of letters patent were enrolled, and the earlier three entries in the Calendar of Fine Rolls have been annotated to the effect that the office was not taken up.⁴¹ Since the office was in contention, there must have been a problem in administering the tax and this must have been a great inconvenience to the merchants. Dorset and Somerset were not the only counties where this problem was found at about this time. There were similar disputes to be found in Wiltshire.

The issuing of grants retrospectively raises the question of what was happening about cloth sales when there was no legally appointed ulnager. The duties of the ulnager will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4, but it should be noted that delays or disputes in the making of appointments represented a risk of loss of revenue. Furthermore, there is evidence that, while some of the ulnagers were involved in the administration of the ulnage, others took up appointments in a situation where it is difficult to see how they could control the operation. One of the factors which makes one wonder if there was some sort of continuing bureaucracy in the counties is the time lapse between some appointments, or the length of time by which some appointments were backdated. One late appointment for which there is no apparent explanation is that of John Aylesworth and Richard Hipkyns to the farm of Gloucestershire in 1417.⁴² The appointment took effect from Easter 1416, eighteen months previously and the Fine Rolls offer no explanation about the administration in the County in the meantime.

⁴¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV, 1461-1471*, p.25 1461 Nov 26; p.26 1461 Dec 3; p.73 1462 Mar 9.

⁴² *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV, 1413-1422*, p.198, 1417 Nov 3.

Quite apart from retrospective appointments, which were eventually enrolled, it is obvious that some officials had been appointed who did not have their appointments enrolled. This being the case, the need for some sort of internal record, kept by the Chancery or Exchequer clerks, showing who was appointed for each place would have been important, if the revenue were to be secured. Nevertheless, even if there were master lists kept in the Exchequer or in the Chancery, the record keeping was not altogether effective. Occasionally, grants were issued that overlapped each other. These were self-monitoring, and the anomalies were rectified. There was also a need to identify places where no ulnager was functioning, and arrange for replacements, although it is possible that such errors were not always rectified promptly. It is noticeable that the largest paying counties such as Somerset, Wiltshire, or East Anglia, do not appear on the list of places where the identity of the ulnager is not apparent from the Fine Rolls. Surprisingly, on two occasions, Bristol appears not to have a valid ulnager, but in each case the next ulnager to be appointed was the one who had previously held office and therefore it seems safe to assume that the same person had continued through the intervening period.

One noticeable difference in the appointments of ulnagers from that of collectors of customs, was that the ulnagers were appointed to carry out their duties “in person or by deputy” whereas the collector of customs was required to “levy and collect in person”.⁴³ There are two obvious reasons for this. A port is more compact than a county and therefore it was physically possible for a collector of customs to carry out his duties in person, without undue delay to the shippers of the freight. It would have been very onerous if the ulnager had had to attend the sealing of every cloth over the county as wide as Hampshire, and delays occasioned by sending for him, and awaiting his arrival would have interfered with the need to attend specific markets. The other reason was that there was much more money at stake in the customs duties; and therefore the official appointed could more reasonably be expected to devote a major part of his time to the job, whereas the ulnagers were handling less revenue, so a lower level of involvement was acceptable. There are occasional glimpses of the deputies in the returns for Hampshire which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Once the approvers were appointed for groups of counties, the need for deputies was inescapable. It would seem that Richard More appointed ulnagers, answerable to him, in each county or pair of counties for which he was responsible, as had the government when it had

⁴³ For example, see the appointment of William Boord to the port of Bristol in 5 November 1446. (*Cal. Fine Rolls* XI·III, 1445-1452, pp.50-1).

appointed ulnagers directly.⁴⁴ There is evidence from Winchester giving further credence to this conclusion. The town records referred to three different men as “ulnager” while More was approver or farmer. It could be that there was a local weights and measures official called an ulnager, in addition to the royal ulnagers, but the references occur in the 1470s and 1480s when the approver or farmer was responsible for more than one county. Richard Colnet was described as ulnager between 1476 and 1478,⁴⁵ a time when John Farle was approver for both Gloucester and Hampshire. There were references to John Coteler being ulnager in 1471-2, 1473-4, and 1476-7.⁴⁶ Roger Wylde was described as ulnager in 1477-8 and 1481-2.⁴⁷ Although deputies and chief underlings are glimpsed through the ulnage records, there is no indication of their numbers.

Thus, despite the fact that the ulnage was a minor tax, it was closely controlled by the Exchequer, and it was sufficiently important that it was worth the bother of altering the method of administration from time to time. Appointments were made, vacancies were filled and errors corrected.

Management by the Exchequer

Even a cursory examination of the records shows that the Exchequer clerks took an interest in them and their uniformity of format suggests that guidance was given in what would be acceptable. That there was a functioning centralised system, at least of sorts, is confirmed by the

⁴⁴ E 358/9 m 51r. The accounts of seizures attribute them to the various deputies in the counties concerned, such as William Neleson, deputy in Berkshire, or John Citor the deputy in the counties of Devon and Cornwall. No seizures were made in Hampshire during the time of the approvers.

⁴⁵ WS ii p.1198

⁴⁶ WS ii items 182-3 (p.591) and 641 (p.896). Coteler was one of the twelve men who had jointly farmed the ulnage for Hampshire between 1461 and 1463. (See *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.74 1462 May 20). He had held other offices in Winchester such as Collector, bailiff, and Chamberlain, but it is noticeable that he did not become mayor. He paid 4s subsidy in 1464 so was not a man of straw.

⁴⁷ WS ii, p.1394. Wylde was probably a fuller by trade, and he held various civic offices in Winchester, eventually becoming mayor in 1487-8. It is necessary to put in a small note of caution. The term ‘ulnager’ was not only used in connection with the officials who collected the subsidy on cloth. There are several examples of ulnagers whose appointments were enrolled in the Patent Rolls and it may be that there were other, lesser, ulnagers to be found. After 1394 there were a few appointments of ulnagers which were enrolled in the Patent Rolls. One of them at least was not an ulnager in the sense used in this chapter. Richard Cliderowe, king’s ulnager in London was empowered to measure cloth but had no statutory fees nor did he collect the subsidy. (*Cal. Pat. Rolls, Ric II, 1391-1396*, p.603 1395 July 6). William Boneface in Cambridgeshire (*Cal. Pat. Rolls, Ric II, 1396-1399*, p.42 1396 December 13). and Richard Warburton and Matthew Radcliff for Dorset (*Cal. Pat. Rolls, Ric II, 1396-1399*, p.454 1398 November 11) were also appointed as ulnagers. It is not clear whether these last two appointments were to include the collection of the subsidy or whether their sole function was measurement. The implications are that they were only concerned with measurement, but there is always doubt about omissions made by the editor of a calendar. There is no doubt about the appointment of the mayor of Norwich as ulnager since he was ulnager of worsteds. Since these cloths paid no subsidy, he can only have been measuring them. (*Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen IV, 1408-1413*, p.194 1410 May 8).

work of Anthony Steel. He examined the receipt rolls for the fifteenth century and writing of those for the 1450s he quoted examples of their shortcomings. He then continued by observing that “in spite of such aberrations one feels that the machine at that time was still running for the most part along more or less familiar lines. This modest confidence is lost in the ensuing decades ...”.⁴⁸ The Fine Rolls of the 1450s contain more evidence of confusion than do those of other decades. The fact that 18 redundant letters patent were enrolled shows that insufficient care was being taken in the preparation of appointments during that decade. The government attempted to overcome its limitations in the ensuing decades by appointing the approvers and decentralising the detailed administration to them.

Further evidence of the control maintained by the Exchequer can be seen in the fact that officials were found who were prepared to administer the ulnage. There is evidence that the Exchequer clerks took an active part in persuading men to take the posts, sometimes standing as mainpemor for the nominee, and sometimes finding mainprise in the Exchequer. It is not apparent from the surviving records how the monitoring of posts was carried out. It would be necessary to arrange for one, and only one, appointment to each post. There were problems when duplicate appointments were made, and there would be a loss to the revenue, or inconvenience to the taxpayers, if a post was left unfilled. Presumably, somebody must have been charged with the responsibility of seeing that an appointment was made to collect the ulnage in each county. If a post fell vacant, someone in government service must have had the task of undertaking negotiations to find a successor and arrange for a new appointment. What is not apparent is whether there was some form of registry in which offices and post holders were listed, so that vacancies became apparent, or whether the clerks simply relied on their knowledge of what appointments were made and relied on their knowledge of these appointments to help them identify when and where a new appointment was needed. Not only was it necessary to monitor the appointments, but it was also necessary to have some arrangement for identifying outstanding returns. The ulnage returns do not seem to have shared the problems resulting from attempts to raise direct taxes on people's wealth or income. These attempts were often frustrated by returns submitted late and often for amounts substantially less than had been anticipated. The ulnage returns came in reasonably promptly and in full, particularly when they were farmed.⁴⁹ John Bouchier, who relinquished the office of ulnager in 1459, sought pardon

⁴⁸ Anthony Steel, *The Receipt of the Exchequer 1377-148*, (Cambridge, 1954) p322.

⁴⁹ They were generally enrolled in order, which suggests that they were received in a logical order. There is nothing in the Ulnage Rolls that suggests that enrolment was delayed pending outstanding returns.

in 1460; he did not expect to escape unpunished if he failed to deliver promptly the money he owed.⁵³

Amongst the other problems that the clerks would have had to manage, was the number of appointments that were clearly not taken up and for which replacements had to be issued. Sometimes this was because the letters patent were the subject of flawed drafting, and were replaced.⁵⁴ Some of them were replaced by grants to the same or other parties who agreed to pay higher fees,⁵⁵ but this leaves some which cannot be explained by any note in the records and may be the casualties of double appointments. The grant made to John May and Thomas Elys in respect of Kent was an admitted duplication. The letters patent, although enrolled, were cancelled because the farm had been granted elsewhere.⁵⁶ A grant was made in respect of Northamptonshire and followed the next day by one to someone else for Northamptonshire and Rutland for a smaller fee. It is not apparent which one was effective.⁵⁷ There was an incident of duplication in respect of Hampshire in 1471 when the approvership was granted to Vincent Pittlesden, although it had already been granted to John Farley.⁵⁸ It was Farley whose grant stood.

Steel examined the principal accounts of state, of which the ulnage records form but a small part. He made comparison of the records of Henry IV with those of Edward IV and he was not complimentary to the latter.⁵⁹ However, it should be noted that, in the case of Hampshire, for all their shortcomings, ulnage returns were received and enrolled for most years during the reign of Edward IV.⁶⁰ This was not the case for the years between 1404 and 1422, when it seems that returns, other than accounting for cloths seized, were not required. The returns rendered by the

⁵³ *Cal. Patent Rolls*, Hen VI, 1452-1460, p. 631 1460 Nov 11.

⁵⁴ For example *Cal. Fine Rolls XVIII*, 1445-1452, p. 193 1451 June 26 replaced the entry found in *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX*, 1452-1461, p. 12 1453 June 17 which was backdated. These entries related to grants to John Maunche and John Whitteokesmede in respect of Wiltshire. The second grant dealt with the financial commitments of the farmers. See also 1451 Oct 4 replaced by 1451 Nov 28. Grant to Thomas Osborne in respect of Kent. The replacement related to the effective start date of the grant.

⁵⁵ For example *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX*, 1452-1461, p. 102-3 1454 Dec 2, replaced by p. 103 1454 Dec 19. Grant in respect of Warwickshire where the farm was increased from £36 19s to £38 14s 6d. Or see, 1426 May 16 replaced by 1426 July 16. Grant in respect of Bristol where farm was increased from £62 13s 4d to £63 6s 8d.

⁵⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII*, 1405-1413, p. 10 1405 Nov 6.

⁵⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XX*, 1461-1471, p. 24 1461 July 3, to Barnabas Bernewell for £8. The second grant was enrolled on 1461 July 4 and was to William Wake for £7 13s 4d.

⁵⁸ See *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI*, 1471-1485, p. 17 1471 Aug 18, for Pittlesden's grant and 1471 July 12 for Farley's.

⁵⁹ Anthony Steel, *The Receipts of the Exchequer 1377-1485*, (Cambridge, 1954), p. 322.

⁶⁰ Returns are missing for Hampshire for the year 1473/4 and for the two years 1480-1482.

approver Richard More in the late 1460s and the 1470s may not be particularly illuminating for twentieth-century historians; they were certainly not detailed as Parliament had directed, but at least More rendered them, thus demonstrating that the Exchequer was exerting some influence. The returns would be prepared and sent to the Exchequer annually or biennially where they were enrolled on the Ulnage Roll. They were also subject to audit and nearly all of them were checked by the Exchequer auditors. The returns follow such a set pattern that there must have been central guidance on what was required.

The returns were scrutinised when they reached the Exchequer. The Particular returns of the 1390s have auditors' marks upon them showing that the number of cloths were checked and totals cross checked against the money received.⁵⁷ This practice was adopted elsewhere in the Exchequer from 1397-8. Steel, writing of the receipt rolls observed that, "In 1397-8 we get the first appearance of small marginal day totals - rough jottings or scribblings ... These marginal - and even ultra-marginal - totals are, however, remarkably accurate."⁵⁸ Not only did the auditor annotate the returns with such marks as "examina", or show his calculations, he also drew a line vertically through the middle of the text, with a cross bar top and bottom to show that he had checked it. There were always two auditors, a Baron of the Exchequer and a clerk. Although their names do not appear on the Ulnage Roll before the return of 1428-29, they are found on some of the returns from which the roll was compiled, from 1398-99 onwards.⁵⁹

Both barons and clerks were obviously professional civil servants, usually of long-standing, for their names are to be found, repeated over many years.⁶⁰ Appendix 5 gives a list of Exchequer officials whose names are found in connection with the ulnage records, together with a few biographical notes about them. These Exchequer officials were men of standing within London and came from good families. The implied criticism of their shortcomings in Carus-Wilson's essay could be read as suggesting that they were too inept to notice that something was amiss. She wrote about the ulnage returns that "the documents now in our hands cannot be treated as strictly 'original' sources, but as compilations, sufficiently accurate perhaps to placate the

⁵⁷ For example, there is a set of marks and calculations on the Winchester return of May 1398 to February 1399. E 101/344/12

⁵⁸ Anthony Steel, *The Receipt of the Exchequer 1377-1485* (Cambridge, 1954) p.8.

⁵⁹ E 101/344/16 for example.

⁶⁰ Biographical details of Exchequer officials can be found in J.C. Sainty, *Officers of the Exchequer*, (List and Index Society 18, 1983). The PRO has an alphabetical list of Exchequer officers based on the Plea Rolls, *Alphabetical List of Officers of the Exchequer from Edward I to Henry VII.* Neither author nor date of compilation are stated but it was located in the Round Room. (Shelf 21 Book 18).

medieval Exchequer, though not to satisfy posterity".⁶¹ There is no reason to think that the auditors did not understand the documents in front of them.

There were, of course, certain differences in the returns of each of the three types of official, which is hardly to be wondered at since the terms of their appointments differed. When the ulnagers were directly employed by the Exchequer, they were required to submit detailed or particular returns accounting for all monies received. In addition, they submitted summaries, which were drafts of the items to be enrolled. Farmers were not required to submit lists of names, and, if Hampshire is representative, were not required to submit routine returns between 1404 and 1421. The approvers were required to submit returns that included lists of names, but seem to have struck a compromise with the Exchequer in which they put in returns which listed names, but only some of them. The form of returns required for the Ulnage Roll settled down into a pattern. First, the official recited details of his appointment and authority to act and stated the period to which the return related. The next section dealt with forfeitures, and either listed the cloths subject to forfeit or stated that no unsealed cloth had been found. If forfeitures had been made, half the value of the cloth would be accounted for, as that had to be sent to London. The receipt of seals was next, in which the number of seals of each kind was set out, and how they were come by. For example they might have been received from the previous officials, or they might have been in hand because the official was remaining in office. Finally, there was the sum of the receipt of seals, in which it was stated what was to become of them.

Obviously the primary role of the ulnage officials was to collect the taxes and remit them to the Exchequer, or to use them to discharge debts at the Exchequer's behest. The returns submitted by the ulnagers, but not those of the farmers, always stated how much money had been collected and how much was being sent to the Exchequer at the same time as the return was submitted. There was always a paragraph "summa recepte" in which the total amount of money gathered was stated. When the official collecting it was directly employed, this figure was derived by stating the amount of subsidy, the amount of ulnage and the revenue derived from the sale of forfeited cloth, if there was any. The money was apparently sent to the Exchequer as cash, or less often, it might be owed to the Exchequer. Sometimes an amount had been retained against the payment due to the ulnager for his expenses. The accounting for the income was taken very seriously. In the Winchester account to 24 October 1397 there was a discrepancy of a farthing.

⁶¹ E.M. Carus-Wilson, "The Aulnage Accounts: A Criticism", reprinted in E.M. Carus-Wilson, *Medieval Merchant Venturers*, (London, 1967), p.289.

This farthing is duly recorded as a discrepancy and remitted with all the other money⁶⁶, which was described as £61 23d ¾d. If the money was paid in full, the liability could be discharged with the phrase “Et quietus est”. How the money was transported to the Exchequer, and the mechanics of presenting it, are not apparent from the ulnage records.

Sometimes the money was not taken to London, because it had already been used. In that situation liability would be discharged against a tally and the tally sticks sent to London. There are examples of that happening with the Winchester ulnage returns.⁶⁷ The details are set out in Table 3-1 below. They show that sometimes all the money due to the Exchequer had already been submitted but sometimes more money was due. Presumably the existence of two or three tally sticks showed that the money had been used in two or in three amounts. Because the payment of farm fees is not recorded in the ulnage records it is not possible to tell whether the farms were paid in cash, or whether sometimes the money had been disbursed in advance and tally sticks sent to the Exchequer. In the later period, Richard More sent tally sticks to the Exchequer for the years 1474-76 and 1476-8.

Date of Return	Sum of Receipt	Amount in Tally	No. of Tallies	Residual Amount	Disposal of Residual Amount
	£ s d.	£ s d.		£ s d.	
1395 Nov 24	63 2 6¼	53 2 6¼	2	10 0 0.	Allowed to ulnager for his expenses
1399 Feb 7	20 17 7½	17 17 7½	2	3 0 0.	Allowed to ulnager for his expenses
1399 Oct 17	28 0 7½	24 13 11½	2	3 6 8.	Allowed to ulnager for his expenses
1402 Jan 13	5 4 9¾	2 18 3¾	3	2 6 6.	Allowed to ulnager for his expenses
1403 Sep 29	32 11 11¼	29 3 4.	3	3 8 0¼	Owed and paid

Source: *Ulnage Roll* E 358/8

Table 3-1 Winchester Returns When Money Had Been Transmitted To The Exchequer By Tally

Once the ulnage was administered by farmers, the form of the returns changed because they were no longer accompanied by particular returns showing all the details of payment by the taxpayers. The farm fees were clearly accounted for at the Exchequer in a way that was quite outside the ulnage returns. The first return from any farmer of the revenue of Hampshire and

⁶⁶ E 358/8 m 4.

⁶⁷ The ulnage roll for Richard II's reign is catalogued as E 358/8 and that for the fifteenth century to 1485 as E 358/9.

Winchester related to the two years ending 2 February 1417 and was an account of seized cloth. The money accounted for on the Ulnage Roll was 3s, being half the proceeds of a piece of forfeited cloth. The return for the eight months to October 1417 similarly only accounted for half the income from a seized cloth amounting to 30s. There were no further returns until 1422. The implications are that only two seizures were made between 1404 and 1422 in Hampshire, and that farmers of the ulnage were not required to render account of other aspects of their stewardship in those years.

Farmers were expected to pay half their fees at Easter and half at Michaelmas, so the government would be able to expect certain sums of money coming in at specific times. It seems likely that most of them were paid reasonably promptly. There were only a few ulnagers who were summoned to answer for debt, or whose executors were excused their debts. The Ulnage Rolls read as though returns came in in reasonable order, for there were very few of the Hampshire ones enrolled out of date sequence.⁶⁴ One late return, in 1432, covered the last few months of the farm held by John Veel and William Wode. Two returns submitted late in the 1450s were made during the farm that had been granted to Peter Hill, Stephen Ede and John Criston (or Christmas).⁶⁵ Stephen Ede died in the year 1452-3, and John Christmas during the year 1453-4. This left Peter Hill to carry on alone. In this situation it is not entirely surprising that there was some difficulty in his rendering returns on time. The Ulnage Rolls were written by copying items onto the roll in the order in which they were received. Therefore, if an item were received late, it was enrolled out of date sequence. No spaces were left for items that were expected and had not arrived.⁶⁶ This approach made thrifty use of parchment, but would have made checking for outstanding returns much more complicated.

The approvers were required, by law, to render returns. The statute of 1464, which provided for the appointment of a new type of ulnagers, namely the approvers, required them to account in full for the taxes they collected. Not only had the approvers to submit their accounts regularly but preparing these returns was part of the basic duties of the approvers, who could not charge the Exchequer for their preparation work. The requirement to submit annual returns was worded thus:

⁶⁴ The exceptions were those for the period from 29 September 1431 to 24 June 1432, and the two years to 29 September 1456.

⁶⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI II, 1437-1445*, p.230 1442 Jan 25.

⁶⁶ Since the length of a return would depend partly on details of forfeited cloth, if any, such a practice would have entailed guessing how much space would be needed, and either leaving too much, or being cramped. Neither of these scenarios is apparent on the rolls.

“And that every of the said Keepers ... shall accompt yearly of the revenues of their said offices in the said Exchequer before the Treasurer of England, and the barons there ..., duly showing in the same accompts the number of the cloths, half cloths, straits and kerseys sealed by them, with the names of the owners of the same.”⁷¹

This is the clause that was honoured in the breach, when full lists of taxpayers were not provided. In the case of Hampshire, the returns of 1466/7 appear to contain full lists of those who paid the subsidy and ulnage. Thereafter, there are only abbreviated lists, which consist of a few names followed by “et aliis”.

Thus Carus-Wilson was right when she said that the approvers did not submit a full list of payers of the subsidy and ulnage to the Exchequer. The Hampshire returns between 1467/8 and 1473/4 come into this category of incomplete returns. Certainly, the run of returns provided by the approvers cannot be used to study the minutiae of the cloth trade because of the lack of detail which they contain. That this happened on several returns from the mid 1460s onwards, could only have come about if the Exchequer clerks had authorised such abbreviation. One approver might have tried such an approach, but for them all to submit in that format could only have come about by permission.

The inadequacy of these returns does not necessarily mean that the revenue was not paid to the Exchequer. The returns were not the payment dockets and the money may have been paid as due. It is true that the approver for Hampshire sent less money to the Exchequer than did the farmers either side, so that it would appear that approvership was not an entirely satisfactory method of collecting the tax. Whether the returns were fraudulent is more problematical,⁷² because to establish fraud means establishing that Richard More’s returns were intended to deceive. Certainly they were recklessly produced with a disregard for the facts, albeit with the apparent connivance of the Exchequer. Cloth production does seem to have been in decline for some years between 1460 and 1480, but whether it dipped as much as the drop in income suggests is open to question. Therefore More, or the ulnagers who worked to him, were probably defrauding the Crown.

⁷¹ *Stat. Realm* 2, 4 Edw IV c.ap.1, p.405.

⁷² In modern Customs and Excise law, three classes of transgression are recognised, carelessness, recklessness and fraud. Fraud entails a definite intention to deceive, whereas recklessness means that returns have been submitted with a serious disregard for the requirements of the law, but with no deliberate intention to deceive. Ordinary mistakes are classed as carelessness, although they may also constitute an offence and be treated as such. See for example Customs and Excise Management Act 1979, s 169, Section 167.

Despite the difficulties of fifteenth-century England, certainly from 1420 onwards, the ulnage continued to be collected. Officials were appointed to administer the law and collect the subsidy. Furthermore they rendered returns, more or less as required. The central government remained in control of the administration and the ulnagers, of whatever 'stripe' were answerable to the Exchequer. Bearing in mind that the ulnage was a new type of tax, the first essay in excise in England, this was no mean achievement in a politically disturbed century.

Problems

As is only to be expected, the collection of a tax, even a minor one, will not be without problems in a ninety year timespan. The Exchequer clerks had to deal with some overt fraud, and some failure to pay by the ulnagers or farmers, for good or bad reasons. Considering that the number of people involved was more than a thousand, the number of problems which were recorded in the Patent Rolls were very few. Whether that is because there were very few problems or whether it is because the Exchequer could not recognise or deal with such problems, is a subject that can only be left to the inclination of the reader. From the ulnage records there is not sufficient evidence for a definitive answer to be made.

In October 1409 a new clause was occasionally inserted in the appointments of farmers, namely that if the payments fell into arrears of more than a month, then the farmer could be removed from office.⁶⁹ The records searched in connection with this study do not show that this ever happened although the insertion of such a clause shows that the Exchequer considered that prompt payment was a reasonable requirement. This clause was not generally used, so it may have indicated that there were particular misgivings about a particular farmer. In the case of Robert Long, to whom this clause applied, he held the farm of Somerset from September 1409 until November 1413, when he was replaced by William Pays and John Waget, who offered a higher farm.⁷⁰

Some ulnagers or farmers failed to pay the ulnage income or the farm fees which they owed. The most alarming reason for non-payment occurred in a fair in Philips Norton, Somerset, when Thomas Neuton, esquire, the collector of ulnage of cloths, was the subject of a vicious

⁶⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIII, 1405-1413*, p165 1409 Oct 27.

⁷⁰ Another change was that, by November of 1409, the requirement to seize cloth not of standard measure was omitted from the grants. *Cal. Fine Rolls XIII, 1405-1413*, p165 1409 Nov 17.

attack. One of his servants was killed, and he himself was much injured and his deputies had been chased from the fair. Unfortunately the date of this attack was not given, although the Commission of Oyer and Terminer was issued in 1401.⁷¹ Neuton had no letters patent enrolled in the period after July 1394, so it is not possible to gain any idea of the date of the attack from that source.

The only other alleged attacks on an ulnager were those claimed in 1460 by John Bouchier, and the validity of the attacks on him are much harder to believe. John Bouchier was the younger son of Henry Bouchier, who was appointed treasurer to Henry VI in 1455. Within ten days of taking up that appointment, Henry Bouchier appointed his son, John, as farmer of the ulnage of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex in June 1455.⁷² (Henry VI was not the only person whose intervention in the administration of the ulnage was partisan.) For whatever reason, the appointment of 1455 was not taken up but was replaced by an alternatively worded grant, issued in 1457 and backdated, to run for eight years from Michaelmas 1455.⁷³ The first farm was for a total of £161 18s 8d and the second one contained an increment of 14s bringing the farm to £162 12s 8d.⁷⁴ The next farmer, Thomas Ormond, paid nearly £162 so Bouchier seems to have been charged a reasonable fee.⁷⁵ John Bouchier relinquished the office in 1459, well before its term expired. In November 1460 he was pardoned payment of the money he had lost, which “losses were sustained by him through robberies in divers parts of the realm”.⁷⁶ His mainpernors were also excused any liability for the debts that they might have incurred. The robberies were not specified and one wonders why he was so particularly unlucky. No other ulnager since Neuton had been so unfortunate. Whether John Bouchier had really been robbed seems doubtful. It is just as plausible that he was not capable of holding the office to which he had been appointed, or that he had misappropriated the money.

Less dramatic than physical attack was suspicion of fraud. There had clearly been problems in Devon, because commissions were appointed on three occasions to enquire “into the

⁷¹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen IV, 1401-1405*, pp.516-7 1401 Apr 29.

⁷² Linda Clark “The Benefits and Burdens of Office: Henry Bouchier (1408-83) Viscount Bouchier and Earl of Essex, and the Treasurership of the Exchequer” in Michael Hicks ed. *Profit, Piety and the Profession in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1990) p.126. She described this as an appointment to a “lucrative office entitling him to a moiety of the forfeitures arising from his surveillance”.

⁷³ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.104 1455 June 9: p.174 1457 May 31.

⁷⁴ This suggests the farm was the subject of competitive tendering from another party.

⁷⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.259 1459 Nov 8.

⁷⁶ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1452-1460*, p.631 1460 Nov 11.

concealment of certain sums of money due to the king from the ulnage of cloths within the County of Devon".⁸¹ The commission was to enquire into irregularities in the times of Richard II and of Henry IV. Unfortunately, the records do not give any indication of who was being accused or what they were alleged to have done. There was a similar problem in connection with the ulnage of Surrey and Sussex, and in 1402 a commission was appointed to enquire about

certain concealments, oppressions, misprisions, and extortions committed by the collectors of the customs and subsidies and their controllers and the ulnagers ... by colour of their offices, and about the concealment of all goods late of Richard II and others who lately made forfeiture to the king.⁸²

With both these affairs, it is impossible to judge how much substance there was in the allegations, and how much a wide brief was given to the commissioners because a problem was suspected but its nature was not well defined. For example, if there was a downturn in production in an area, the ulnage income would drop even from an honest ulnager, but this legitimate reason might give rise to unfounded allegations of fraud. On the other hand, the case prepared against the officials in Surrey and Sussex reads as though various people had suffered considerably at their hands, and not only the king.

After the cases at the beginning of the century, there were no more examples of problems with the ulnage until 1455. In that year Eleanor Hull, the mother of Sir Edward Hull, deceased, was pardoned the various moneys he owed.⁸³ He had served Henry V and Henry VI in various capacities, including being Sheriff of Somerset and Dorset, and Sheriff of Devon, as well as being ulnager for Somerset between 1443 and 1453.⁸⁴ Therefore, the debts arising from the ulnage may not have been the major part of the outstanding money.

There were a few debts pardoned in the later years under review. In 1466 Thomas Asby, citizen and draper of London, and Margaret his wife, were pardoned "all offences, trespasses and concealments committed by (the late John Maunche) and all debts and accounts due from him to the king".⁸⁵ Margaret had previously been the wife of John Maunche and was the executrix of his will. Maunche, who was also a London draper, had been the involved in some strongly contested bids for the farm of the ulnage in both Wiltshire and Somerset.⁸⁶ That he died without

⁸¹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen IV, 1399-1401*, p. 348 1400 Aug 24, p. 413 1400 Nov 4, p. 520 1401 July 5.

⁸² *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen IV, 1402-1405*, p. 70 1402 Mar 1.

⁸³ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1452-1461*, p. 249, 1455 Aug 29.

⁸⁴ If Edward Hull had served Henry V, by 1455 his mother must have been well advanced in years.

⁸⁵ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edu IV, Hen VI, 1461-1467*, p. 448 1466 Feb 4.

paying the money he owed on some of them is an ironic twist of fate. Then in 1465, William Sterling was pardoned for money he owed in connection with the farm of Surrey and Sussex since September 1462.⁸¹ Two further pardons were issued in 1481. The first of these was to Thomas Shire, who had been approver in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire⁸² and the other was to John Tailor of Exeter, who had been surveyor of customs, as well as “keeper of the seal for the subsidy and ulnage” in Devon.⁸³ As keeper of the seal, he must have been answerable to Richard More who had been approver and then farmer for Devon, along with many other counties. This case shows how the deputies of the approvers and large farmers could also be held liable for their actions.

There is a reference to one other case concerning a debt from unpaid ulnage money due to the Exchequer. The debt had arisen from a case which had been resolved in 1387 when it had been ascertained that Henry Colas owed £178 8s 11d from the subsidy of cloths for sale in Kent. It had been agreed that the debt should be discharged at the rate of 20s a year, and these payments were to be a charge on Henry's lands.⁸⁴ By 1475, only £15 1s 8d remained to be paid, and the entry in the Patent Rolls dealt with the grant of the money by the king to one of his servants. The severity of this punishment, compared with the ineffective treatment of the transgressors a century later, such as John Maunche, is very marked.

These cases are all that have been recorded in the Patent Rolls relating to misdeeds in connection with the ulnage between 1394 and 1485. There were two cases of assault, and five cases where officials were excused paying the revenue to the Exchequer, (two being excused posthumously), plus one case that had arisen earlier and not been excused. It would not be reasonable to think that these were all the frauds, and cases of incompetence verging on fraud, that took place during the ninety years under review, but they are the only ones judged serious enough to need official action to be taken.

⁸¹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, *Edw IV*, *Hen V*, 1461-1467, p.461-2 1465 Sept 23. He was pardoned his debts, but his appointment had not been enrolled.

⁸² *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, *Edw IV*, *Edw V*, *Ric III*, 1476-1485, p.234 1481 Jan 1. Shire had been approver between 1471 and 1479.

⁸³ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, *Edw IV*, *Edw V*, *Ric III*, 1476-1485, p.261-2 1482 Feb 10.

⁸⁴ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, *Edw IV*, *Hen V*, 1461-1467, p.505 1475 Mar 14.

Timing of Appointments

Between 1394 and 1485, 1006 men had their appointments to administer the ulnager enrolled in the Fine Rolls. The timing of appointments was not evenly spread. Half the enrolled appointments were made in the 35 years to 1429 and half were made in the 55 years from 1430 to 1485. The pattern of appointments is summarised in Table 3-2 below.

Decade	No	%	Commonest Type of Official
1394-99	175	17	Direct employee
1400-09	156	16	Direct employee until 1403, then farmer
1410-19	104	10	Farmer
1420-29	74	7	Farmer
1430-39	80	8	Farmer
1440-49	70	7	Farmer
1450-59	136	14	Farmer
1460-69	107	11	Farmer until mid decade, then approver
1470-79	78	8	Approver until 1478, then farmer
1480-85	27	3	Farmer
Total	1006	101	

Note: the year of enrolment, not the year of appointment, is shown.

Source: Calendar of Fine Rolls

Table 3-2 Numbers of Appointments by decade

All the ulnagers were appointed, or re-appointed in July 1394. There was never again such a complete re-arrangement of the administration of the ulnager. There were, of course, peaks and troughs, years in which there were many appointments and years in which there were few. This section seeks to draw attention to some of the factors which influenced the number of appointments in any given year. A change of sovereign normally resulted in a flurry of appointments, with the notable exception of Richard III, whose attention was attracted elsewhere. In addition to this most obvious cause, there were a few other peak years, most notably 1403 and 1451.

There was considerable dislocation in 1399, even before Henry IV replaced Richard II. In June and July, Richard II's administration started to lease the ulnager to farmers instead of having ulnagers who were directly answerable to the Exchequer for their activities. Eleven appointments of farmer were made. Three of these, for the North Riding of Yorkshire, for Oxfordshire, and for Essex with Hertfordshire, were for places never again farmed as separate entities so useful comparisons with later figures are not possible. Of the eight farms where comparisons can usefully be made five of the farms had fees set much higher than any later farms. No reason is apparent. Possibly the fee was set close to the total revenue, and due allowance for administrative costs not made. Alternatively the figures may have been set on the assumption that production levels were high or even increasing, which was not in fact the case. Cloth exports were declining around the turn of the century.⁸⁵ Bearing in mind that the monarchy was in crisis, it is possible that the fees may have been set high as a form of subsidy, either voluntary or forced. Table 3-3 shows how atypical these grants were.

County	Farm Of Summer 1399	Next Farm	Year	Second Highest Farm For County,	Year
	£ s d	£ s d		£ s d	
Somerset	220 0 0	106 13 4	1403	158 15 2	1454
Bristol	130 0 0	50 19 8	1406	65 2 0	1461
Warwickshire ⁸⁶	61 0 0	62 0 0	1403	38 15 0	1460
London	33 6 8	24 0 0	1403	40 0 0	1439
Dorset	22 0 0	14 13 4	1405	17 7 8	1434
Surrey, Sussex	14 13 4	17 6 8	1399	21 0 0	1427
Shropshire	⁸⁷ 12 0 0	12 0 0	1403	13 17 8	1455
Hereford (city)	6 0 0	2 0 0	1400	2 13 4	1403

Table 3-3 Farm Fees Set In 1399 Compared With Later Farms

⁸⁵ John Munro has pointed out that the exports of broadcloth dropped from "an average of 38,600 pieces in 1390-1400 to one of 32,900 pieces in 1400-1409". Since exports represented a very large proportion of the production of broadcloths, such a downturn would have an adverse effect of the manufacturing centres of the country. It may be that contemporaries did not recognise the decline in trade as a trend, but perceived it merely as a temporary fluctuation. It is much easier to determine trends after an event than during it. (See John H.A. Munro *Wool, Cloth and Gold: The Struggle for Bullion in Anglo-Burgundian Trade 1340-1478* (Toronto, 1972) pp.62-3).

⁸⁶ The figures for Warwickshire are inexplicable. The farm for 1399 was £61, and that granted in 1403 was £9 15s 8½d for the first year and then £62 per annum thereafter. However by 1405 the County had reverted to an ulnager. It was farmed again in 1408 at £32 12s 9d. It looks as though the £62 was over-optimistic and could not be sustained. There may have been an element of competitive tendering as the office was taken sometimes by John Ray and sometimes by Roger Benet at various times between 1394 and 1408.

⁸⁷ Jointly with Staffordshire.

The farms let by Richard II were replaced by directly answerable ulnagers. Initially Henry IV adopted the policy of employing directly answerable ulnagers, and as has been said, because of a clerical error, many of the initial grants had to be enrolled twice, in October and November 1399. This was because the drafting of the October grants was flawed⁸⁸ by the omission of the exemption of cheaper cloths. This was one of the very rare administrative errors which are apparent in the Calendar of Fine Rolls.⁸⁹

Henry reverted to farming the ulnage in most counties in 1403. This decision to replace directly employed ulnagers with farmers in 1403 brought about another substantial number of appointments close together. Farming produced a lower return to the Exchequer but it was, in principle a more secure income because the farmers pledged to pay set amounts at predetermined times. Rhidian Griffiths has written of the "collapse of the Exchequer in the summer of 1403" without elaborating further.⁹⁰ A crisis in the Exchequer would make direct control of the ulnage difficult, and farming would be a way of ensuring receipt of a substantial portion of the revenue with much less effort in the centre. It is possible that the Percy rebellion of 1403 put additional strains on the Exchequer, leaving it unable to deal with the minutiae which it had previously handled, and therefore forcing working practices to change. When the ulnage was farmed the Exchequer clerks no longer needed to check itemised returns. They had to ensure that the right sum of money was received, or accounted for, at the right time, and that suitable returns were submitted but this was a far less onerous task.

After 1403 the next group of appointments was made in May 1413 on the accession of Henry V. Presumably because of the difficulties surrounding the accession of Henry VI, and the need to establish a suitable method of administering the country while he grew up, there was no noticeable grouping of appointments immediately after he came to the throne. New appointments were made but spread over a longer period of time than were those made immediately after his father or grandfather had come to the throne. The problems caused by the succession of a baby, and the uneasy distribution of the royal prerogative meant that the ulnage

⁸⁸ The author had failed to exempt "cloth of Kersey, Kendalcloth, Frise of Coventre, Coggeware, all other strait cloth, or parcel of cloth, and cloth of Wales, whereof the dozen exceeds not the value of 13s 4d, as in the last Parliament it has been ordained". See *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, pp.36-8 1399 Oct 17.

⁸⁹ This process is described by J.L. Kirby who wrote of December 1399 that "while the council was busy hearing petitions and settling disputes, the Chancery was issuing confirmations of all the grants of offices and annuities made by Richard II, so that their holders could apply to the Exchequer for their fees and pensions". See: J.L. Kirby, *Henry IV of England* (London, 1970) pp.84-5.

⁹⁰ Rhidian Griffiths "Prince Henry and Wales 1400-1408" in Michael Hicks ed. *Profit, Piety And The Professions In Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1900) p.58.

was not immediately dealt with. In fact only seven appointments were made in the last four months of 1422, and eight more in 1423.⁹¹

For no apparent reason of state, there were quite a lot of appointments in 1451 although this may have arisen from the start of the period of competitive bidding for the farms and heightened activity in consequence. If the evidence of the customs records are to be believed, the 1440s were profitable years for the cloth industry, and probably for the ulnagers. Therefore by 1451, there was an active market of people anxious to take up the office.

There were a large number of appointments made in 1461 following the accession of Edward IV who came to the throne after the high ulnage farm rents of the early 1450s had dropped substantially. At first his appointments were no different in form from those of the latter years of Henry VI. The only difference in the early years of Edward IV arose because men were wary of farming the ulnage in 1460, after the dramatic drop in profitability which had occurred in the 1450s. There were also some difficulties in obtaining mainpennors after 1460, especially in 1470, and the problem was resolved by mainprise being found in the Exchequer. From 1464, the farmers were progressively replaced by a smaller number of approvers. The upheavals of 1470 and 1471 meant a widespread re-appointment of officers, including the appointment of many farmers, although these appointments were short-lived. Edward IV, once he had regained the throne, restored the approvers. These officials were replaced in 1478, when Parliament banned approvers, leading to another busy time for appointments. Richard III's administration did not re-appoint ulnage officials in any significant numbers.

Apart from the reasons just outlined that produced significant clusters of appointments, there were a variety of factors influencing the routine number and timing of appointments. Farms were usually issued for a term of years and the expiry of the term meant that a new agreement had to be drawn up, either with the current incumbent or with a new one. Incumbents might become ill or die and replacements would be needed. These were normal evolutionary changes, as are to be expected in any long term organisation. Sometimes drawbacks in the terms of appointment made them unacceptable and a replacement grant was issued. The other cause of

⁹¹ In 1422 appointments were made for Somerset, Bristol, East Anglia, Cambridge and Huntingdonshire, Wiltshire, Herefordshire and Hampshire. In 1423, appointments were made for Holland in Lincolnshire (January), Worcestershire (February), Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire (May), Derbyshire (July), Lindsey in Lincolnshire (July), Middlesex (Oct), Nottinghamshire (Nov), and Surrey and Sussex (Nov). Thus London, Kent, Yorkshire, Dorset and other counties either did not have appointments made or, if made, not enrolled.

new appointments was change in the amount of farm arising from a change in the amount of revenue from the area.

Grants of office were occasionally relinquished. The grant made in respect of Bristol in July 1421 was surrendered and replaced by one which paid a significantly higher farm in November 1421.⁹² Other reasons might cause them to be surrendered. In the case of Hampshire in December 1422, the grant was surrendered because William Wode, one of the two farmers, had died. A new grant was issued to his erstwhile partner, John Veel, who then held office on his own.⁹³ There were occasional other grants where one farmer surrendered his office in favour of another. For example, in 1415, Thomas Caundyssh and Thomas Newton, serjeants of the king's cellar, and Thomas White, citizen of London, had been granted the farm of Shropshire for twenty years⁹⁴, and in 1424 they surrendered this farm in favour of Edmund Morys, on the same terms, but back-dated to Michaelmas 1422.⁹⁵ There is nothing in the terms of the grant which indicates what lay behind this particular change of office holder, although the delay in issuing the letters patent was unusually long.

Occasionally, local government changes would require the issue of new letters patent. For example, by April 1442, Kingston-upon-Hull had been awarded county status, and therefore Robert Waterton, who held the farm for the County of Yorkshire and the City of York, no longer held sway in Hull. Waterton received new letters patent which specifically included Hull in the places for which he held the farm.⁹⁶ Waterton complained vociferously that he had not had notice of the removal of Hull from Yorkshire. All his fuss did not seem to have benefited him, because, in July 1442, Hugh Cliderowe was granted the farm of Kingston-upon-Hull, retrospectively to April 1442.⁹⁷ However Hull was administered with the rest of Yorkshire probably from 1447. In 1447, Henry Banaster, by bill of the treasurer, was granted, the farm for

⁹² *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV, 1413-1422*, pp.393-4 1421 July 20 and Nov 7. The first grant, made to Thomas Stanford and Ralph Willand, was for a farm of £54 13s 4d, whereas the second grant, made to Ralph Weylond and John Forde, was for £60.

⁹³ *Cal. Fine Rolls XV, 1422-1430*, p.16 1422 Dec 8.

⁹⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV, 1413-1422*, p.111 1415 Dec 1.

⁹⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XV, 1422-1430*, pp.61-2 1424 Feb 21.

⁹⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls XV, 1422-1430*, pp.201-2 1442 Apr 20. Waterton's letters patent include the statement that "he had not notice that the king, ... has separated the town of Kingston-upon-Hull, of late parcel of the County of York and parcel of the farm to the said Robert, from the said County of York and had caused it to be incorporated in itself as a County, so that the said Robert cannot execute the said letters within the said town, as from of old has customarily been done, and yet renders yearly as much as was accounted for in the Exchequer before the incorporation of the said town." This replacement grant was issued under the privy seal, and dated by authority of Parliament, instead of the usual issue by "bill of the treasurer".

⁹⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI/II, 1437-1445*, p.202 1442 July 15.

twenty years at an annual fee of 113 marks plus an increment of £1 6s 8d.⁹⁸ It is not clear whether Banaster ever took up the post because the grant “was vacated on surrender” in the following year. For some reason, Henry VI had personally intervened and granted the ulnager of Yorkshire, York and Hull to Thomas Clifford knight and Walter Calverley esquire at the same aggregate farm of 115 marks.⁹⁹ Henry Banaster was a king’s serjeant who presumably was recompensed in some other way.

This intervention by Henry VI was typical of his activities, as he was prone to give office to personal supplicants in a way that cut across established procedures. Henry VI’s profligacy with state revenues, making haphazard grants and intervening in the appointments system in ways which were not appropriate, caused considerable problems for his administration. Ralph Griffiths has pointed out that “the ready way in which the king responded to petitions occasionally led to confusion”.¹⁰⁰ Griffiths’ comments were a general criticism, because Henry’s behaviour was not restricted to any one part of the administration. The ulnager was not exempt from this treatment, and conflicting and confusing grants of farm were issued in that area by the king, as the Yorkshire incident shows.

Thus the timing of significant numbers of appointments of ulnagers were much as might be expected. A change of sovereign would need a host of new appointments, but, in addition, there were one or two special events that resulted in large scale change. These were particularly the change to farmers in 1403, the change to approvers in 1464, and the competitive bidding for office at the beginning of the 1450s.

Length of Appointments

Whereas the ulnagers mostly had open-ended appointments, the farmers were usually appointed for a fixed term of years. Indeed, one way of testing to see whether there was some central monitoring of appointees is to see whether there were long periods when no ulnager appears to

⁹⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV/III, 1445-1452*, p.49 1447 July 2.

⁹⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI/III, 1445-1452*, p.78 1448 Feb 9.

¹⁰⁰ Ralph A Griffiths, *The reign of King Henry VI* (London, 1981), p364 Griffiths commented that Henry VI’s “lack of foresight enabled numerous conflicting grants to be issued, one gift being superseded by another, bitter arguments resulted in several parts of the country. The warning signs were flashing as early as 1438. At times Henry seemed uncertain whether a grant was capable of implementation, and a significant number of them carried the proviso that they should take effect only if an identical patent had not already been issued. ... Bungling of this kind - for it can be regarded as no less - sometimes led to violence, as one party was ejected from land or office by a rival.” It is not apparent whether the Yorkshire ulnager grant of 1448 was one of these bungled grants, although it is always possible.

have been in office. The absence of a tax collector was less likely to be brought immediately to the notice of the Exchequer than was the existence of conflicting parties. It is difficult to know which of the government archives would reveal counties without ulnagers. The Ulnage Rolls recorded the return of stewardship by the officials. The Exchequer Memoranda Rolls recorded the payments of fees or revenue and the Fine Rolls recorded most of the appointments. None of them would have provided a complete list of appointees. The Ulnage Rolls probably contained all the items submitted to the Exchequer, but the absence of a return for a particular county might mean the absence of an appointee, or it might mean the failure to have submitted a return by an office holder. The Memoranda Rolls would be a fairly good source, but when two counties were ulnaged as one, the receipt of payment could only be placed in one county's record. For example, John Farley's return of money, when he was approver for Gloucester and Hampshire in 1472/3 was recorded under the Gloucestershire account. The Fine Rolls were similarly unsatisfactory, for not all appointments were enrolled therein.

An analysis of appointments recorded in the Fine Rolls show where there appear to have been times when there was no ulnager for a given county. Because not all appointments were enrolled, a gap may be indicative of a failure to enrol an appointment rather than an absence of any appointment. There were 33 instances where no appointment had been enrolled for at least a year after the expiry of the previous appointment. There were three such in the first decade of the fifteenth century, four in the second decade, three in the 1420s, five in the 1430s, seven in the 1440s, six in the 1450s, two in the 1460s and three in the 1470s. Thus the time of greatest difficulty was during the adult years of Henry VI. In some cases, the next appointment of official was to the person who already held the office and it is reasonable to assume continuity. There were nine appointments where there was continuity of at least one official. These appointments were mostly made one or two years after the expiry of the previously registered letters patent. Of the remaining twenty-four "missing" appointments, it is not possible to tell from the Calendar of Fine Rolls what the omissions represent. It may be that there was no functioning ulnager, or it may be that the Exchequer allowed the incumbent to continue, in the hopes that something would turn up.

There may be occasional transcription errors which distort the figures, albeit not significantly. For example, in January 1404, according to the Calendar of Fine Rolls, Henry Somer and John Stere were appointed to farm the ulnage of Hampshire and Winchester for one year from

Michaelmas 1403.¹⁰¹ However, the return which was enrolled refers to their having been appointed for seven years, although they initially put in a return for eighty days to the 31 January 1404.¹⁰² If they were appointed for seven years, the fact that they held office for five years would be quite normal and unremarkable as a fair number of officials did not complete their contracted time. The Ulnage Roll only contains two items for Hampshire between 1404 and 1415, so it is not possible to refer to that source for clarification.

The grants made from the ulnage revenues of Hampshire do not help to determine what was happening in the years for which there was no enrolled ulnager or farmer. In 1397 the mayor and commonalty of Winchester had been granted £26 annually for the repair of their City walls for five years.¹⁰³ This grant does not appear to have been renewed; certainly no renewal is to be found in either the Patent Rolls or the Close Rolls. The next record of the use of the Hampshire ulnage was the grant to John Tylle in 1413.¹⁰⁴ One must assume that the ulnage was being collected and the money paid into the Exchequer, even though the farmers were not submitting accounts of their stewardship. Therefore, a detailed examination of the records for Hampshire suggest^s that the apparent absence of legal ulnagers arises from a typographical error: the ulnagers claimed to have been appointed for seven years which would mean there was no period without ulnagers in Hampshire, and it seems likely that there is an error in the Calendar of Fine Rolls. This explanation does not necessarily extend to other counties which appear at times not to have had ulnagers.

There are six instances when no appointment of ulnager was enrolled for more than fifteen years after the expiry of the previous appointment. These occurred in Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Oxford and Berkshire, London, Cambridge and Huntingdonshire and Leicestershire. The details are set out in table 3-4 below. It is noticeable that five out of the six instances occurred in the years around the 1450s, and that the next appointment was either for the same or a smaller farm or the administration was put into the hands of an approver. In four of the counties, the farms were negligible, although the other two were large enough to suggest a reasonable-sized trade in the county. It is possible that there were particular difficulties regarding the work in London, but the explanation for Oxfordshire and Berkshire's apparent unpopularity is not

¹⁰¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, p.232 1404 Jan 31.

¹⁰² E 358/9 m 4v

¹⁰³ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Ric II, 1396-1399*, p.73 1397 Feb 16.

¹⁰⁴ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen IV, 1408-1413*, p.452 1413 Jan 4.

obvious. Incidentally, it is interesting to see that London was placed into the hands of an approver as early as 1457. This suggests that that method of administration might have been introduced, even without a change of monarch. It is always possible that letters patent may have been issued but not enrolled for some of the apparent gaps. It is equally possible that, with the small counties, no one could be found to take the posts. If finding officers had become as difficult as these examples suggest, Edward IV's need to revitalise the administration, by introducing approvers, becomes more apparent. This does not explain why Hertfordshire was not mentioned in any grant between 1448 and 1479. In 1448 John Dyer took the farm for seven years at £2 13s 4d.¹⁰⁵ No grant in respect of that County is found again until 1479 when it was granted with other eastern counties to Richard Brond and the component of the farm for Essex and Hertfordshire jointly was £49 12s.¹⁰⁶ It is always possible that the County was grouped with Essex at an earlier date, but this is not necessarily the case.¹⁰⁷ Westmoreland and Cumberland were not mentioned after 1406, nor Northumberland after 1461, when its last farm was enrolled. The amount of revenue involved seems to have been negligible as the farm there had dwindled from its peak of £2 8s 6d to a low of 12s 6d¹⁰⁸, although there must have been some commercial production in Northumberland for any farm at all to be promised.

¹⁰⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XVIII, 1445-1452*, p.106 1448 Nov 9.

¹⁰⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, p.181 1479 Aug 5

¹⁰⁷ In 1448 John Dyer took the farm of Hertfordshire for seven years at £2 13s 4d. (*Cal. Fine Rolls XVIII, 1445-1452*, p.106 1448 Nov 9). No grant in respect of that County is found again until 1479 when it was granted with other eastern counties to Richard Brond and the component of the farm for Essex and Hertfordshire jointly was £49 12s. (*Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, p.181 1479 Aug 5). It is always possible that the County was grouped with Essex, but this is not necessarily the case.

¹⁰⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.25 1461 Nov 21. William Grene, a clerk of the Exchequer, and Alan Birde agreed to pay 12s and an increment of 8d for the farm of Northumberland including Newcastle upon Tyne, and this farm, the equivalent of the subsidy on 38 cloths of assise, was the last mention of Northumberland for at least 25 years. This level of production suggests that there were at most three or four commercial woollen manufacturers making broadcloth in the County at the beginning of the 1460s.

County	Farm	Date Of Expiry Of Grant	Date Of Start Of Next Grant	New Farm	Time Lapse (Years)
	£ s d			£ s d	
Staffordshire ¹⁰⁹	2 13 4	1418	1437	1 0 0	19
Derbyshire ¹¹⁰	0 13 4	1439	1453	0 13 4	14
Oxfordshire and Berkshire ¹¹¹	24 0 0	1442	1453	24 0 0	11
London ¹¹²	40 0 0	1449	1457	Approver	8
Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire ¹¹³	1 11 8	1458	1465	Approver	7
Leicestershire ¹¹⁴	1 13 4	1459	1465	Approver	6

Table 3-4 Examples of Long Periods When no Farmer appears to have been appointed.

Despite occasional gaps, particularly in some minor cloth counties, there were ulnagers appointed in some guise or another for most counties for most of the time. Therefore the rewards must have been high enough to tempt men to take the posts, even in the smaller paying counties. Not only that, but there was a central administration, in the Exchequer, able and willing to organise and maintain the structure.

Remuneration of Office Holders

The evidence for the rate at which either ulnagers or farmers were remunerated is slight in the extreme. There is nothing in the Fine Rolls, the Close Rolls or the Patent Rolls which gives any indication of the remuneration that the Exchequer thought fit. In the ulnage returns, some ulnagers refer to their having held back their payments from the money sent, or not sent, to the Exchequer. Apart from these spasmodic references, there is no general guidance in the ulnage records. The profits made by farmers are not evident at all, as there is no mention of them anywhere.

¹⁰⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV*, 1413-1422, p.10 1413 Oct 17; *XI/I*, 1430-1437, p.308 1437 Feb 20.

¹¹⁰ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV*, 1430-1437, p.177 1433 Dec 14; *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX*, 1452-1461, p.61 1453 Nov 8.

¹¹¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV*, 1430-1437, p.251, 1435 Dec 18; *XIX*, 1452-1461, p.10 1453 Mar 2.

¹¹² *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV*, 1437-1445, p.63 1439 Feb 16; *XIX*, 1452-1461, p.175 1457 Feb 9.

¹¹³ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV*, 1445-1452, p.106 1449 Feb 17.

¹¹⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV*, 1445-1452, p.106 1449 Feb 23; *XX*, 1461-1471, p.157 1465 Oct 2.

The Hampshire and Winchester returns mention occasional remuneration of ulnagers, and these payments will now be examined. The rate of payments does not seem to be constant, nor is it always possible to tell the timescale to which payment relates. There is some evidence that suggests an ulnager who put in several returns may have been rewarded once and not against each return, and that is explicitly stated to be the case when John Balon was rewarded for his work as the Hampshire ulnager. (This is the only Hampshire payment which was recorded.) The details of the payments are set out in Table 3-5 below. A comparison of the amount of money collected and the recompense does not lead to any standard scale that can be identified. If there were a scale applied by the Exchequer which took into consideration other factors than the revenue collected, it is not apparent. Certainly, on the basis of the Hampshire and Winchester figures, no useful pattern can be determined beyond saying that mostly the remuneration lay between 12% and 20% of the money collected with an average around 15%, or three shillings in the pound. It is worth noting that the Hampshire ulnager was recompensed at a higher rate than most of the Winchester ulnagers. Although less money was collected in Hampshire, it was undoubtedly more expensive to collect than the revenues of cloth in Winchester and its surrounds, because the taxpayers were more widespread.

	Ulnager	Start Date	End Date	Money Collected	Recompense	%
				£ s d.	£ s d.	
Hampshire	John Balon ¹²¹	7 Apr 1398	12 Nov 1402	5 10 3.	0 19 3½	17.5
Winchester	John Skillyng	20 July 1394	24 Nov 1395	63 2 6¼	10 0 0.	15.8
Winchester	John Fromond	24 Nov 1395	24 Oct 1397	61 1 11¼		
Winchester	John Dollyng	25 Oct 1397	16 May 1398	20 4 0.		
Winchester	Nicholas Tanner	2 May 1398	7 Feb 1399	20 17 7¼	3 0 0.	14.3
Winchester	John Stere	7 Feb 1399	17 Oct 1399	28 0 7½	3 6 8.	11.9
Winchester	Robert Archer	21 Nov 1399	12 Dec 1400	38 5 6¼	4 18 10¼	12.9
Winchester	John Dollyng	12 Dec 1400	5 Feb 1401	8 15 3¼		
Winchester	Robert Archer	5 Feb 1401	1 July 1401	15 1 8¼	2 18 3¼	19.3
Winchester	John Dollyng	1 July 1401	3 Oct 1401	3 17 5¼		
Winchester	Robert Archer	3 Oct 1401	13 Jan 1402	5 4 9¼	2 6 6.	44.3
Winchester	Robert Archer	13 Feb 1402	29 Sep 1402	23 5 6¼		
Winchester	Robert Archer	29 Sep 1402	29 Sep 1403	32 11 4½		

Table 3-5 Examples of Long Periods When no Farmer appears to have been appointed.

Even discounting the final Winchester figure, there appears to be no set formula for reimbursement of ulnagers, and yet there must have been some guiding parameters set within the Exchequer. It seems unlikely that the £2 6s 6d paid to Robert Archer at the beginning of

¹²¹ The revenue that John Balon collected has been aggregated because he served on several occasions.

1402 was the reward for the three month period of the return against which it was paid. Archer held office for all but eight months between November 1399 and September 1403. The fact that no payments for John Dollyng were recorded, nor any to John Fromond, cannot imply that they were not paid for their work. John Fromond was a professional man who became Steward of Winchester College¹²² and would not have taken on the ulnager without recompense. John Dollyng seems to have been a reserve ulnager, who took the post when others were not available. Even so, he is not likely to have taken the post without payment. In any case he seems an unlikely ulnager. He did not hold civic office in Winchester, and he was primarily an innkeeper, although he did deal in cloths, including presenting a number for ulnaging.¹²³

The amounts of money collected by the ulnagers was, of course, known at the Exchequer. Therefore, when the administration was changed to farming, the people in charge of the contracts knew the appropriate charge for each fee farm. The farms needed to be as high as possible to ensure maximum revenue collection, but not so high that the post would be attractive to no one, or to no one suitable. The combined revenue raised in Hampshire and Winchester in the year 1402-3 was £36 11s 8d. The first farm was set at £30 in 1403, which would leave the farmer £6 11s 8d for his effort and expenses. This gave a potential return of 18% which was a little higher than the rate apparently paid by the Exchequer to the ulnagers. After 10 years, the farm was increased to £32 at which it remained until 1432. There is no way of knowing whether the increase arose from an upturn in trade, or from a desire by the Exchequer to cut the profit margins of the farmers. Had they been cut by much, there would have been difficulty in filling the posts, so it is more likely that it represents an upturn in trade.

In the first grants of Henry V's reign, there is evidence that the Exchequer officials suspected that they could be getting higher farms than were in fact being paid. In the grant made in 1413 to John Bowere of Boston, in respect of Holland, Lincolnshire, there is a conditional clause. The farm was granted

with proviso that if any other person shall be willing without fraud to render more for the said farm by Easter next, then the said John shall render thereafter such larger sum or be removed from the farm at the will of the king.¹²⁴

This clause became quite common in later years. That it took effect can be inferred from the number of grants where the farmer has agreed to pay a fee with an increment in addition. Prior

¹²² WCM, Vol. 1, p. liii.

¹²³ WS ii p 1216

to the 1450s the increments were mostly small and there is little obvious evidence of fierce bidding for office. Incoming farmers would agree to pay the fee paid by their predecessor together with an increment and would then settle down to carry out their office. In the early part of the 1450s, many of these increments became much greater than had previously been common and the competitive bidding was much fiercer. This fierce rivalry did much to destabilise the existing pattern of farming the ulnage and to displace a number of established farmers. Many of the long-term farmers relinquished office in that decade, but some of them must have been quite old by then and ready to retire. However the abrasive climate probably contributed to the absence long-established farmers of the ulnage in the next generation.

Most of the fiercely competitive bidding for office took place in the 1450s. It is apparent because letters patent were issued to the disputants; these letters were enrolled and then overtaken by others. There was one earlier example of the incremental process at work, in Bristol, in the 1420s. The farm of Bristol was apparently increasing in value, presumably because of an increase in the volume of broadcloths produced. In May 1426 John Benet agreed to take the farm there at a fee of £60 and an increase of 53s 4d. In July he surrendered his letters patent to the Chancery for cancellation and was granted new ones with a yearly farm of £62 13s 4d and an increment of 13s 4d.¹¹⁸ There is nothing in the calendared records to give any hint of the specifics which lay behind this last increase but it seems likely that someone else was offering more than Benet was currently paying. In general, though, the system continued to be settled during the 1420s and 1430s and some people held office for many years.

The farm of Somerset, subject of competitive bidding in the 1450s, contains one of the rare mistakes found in the records. The clerk who wrote the item amending the error quite specifically stated that the king had been involved in the appointments, and therefore by implication blamed him for the fact that the post had been filled twice. On 16 May 1453, by bill of the treasurer, letters patent were issued to William Seingeorge, knight, and John Maunche,¹¹⁹ draper of London, for seven years, backdated to Easter 1453.¹²⁰ Then on 1 June, a fortnight later, letters patent were issued to John Gauter, merchant of Somerset, and William Peller,

¹¹⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls* XI, 1422-1430, p.144 1426 May 16 and July 16.

¹¹⁹ This name is variously spelt "Maunche" and "Manuche". I have adopted the former spelling.

¹²⁰ *Cal. Fine Rolls* XIX, 1452-1461, p.10 1453 May 16. This grant included the words "for which answer has been made to the king" which was not a standard phrase, although occasionally found.

yeoman of Hampshire, and also for the farm of Somerset.¹²¹ The two items were enrolled, adjacent to one another in the Fine Rolls. The entry in the Calendar of Fine Rolls, wherein the matter was resolved, recited the facts but even in translation the irritation caused to the clerks can be sensed.¹²² The document included the explanation that “although by other letters patent ... the king committed the said farm” to Gauter and Peller, Seingeorge and Maunche had offered to match the payment of £129 1s 8d promised by Gauter and Peller and hence secured the post. Their claim was held to be the stronger claim as their letters patent had been issued first but they only secured their claim by matching the farm rent.

The recompense of the approvers is no more apparent than that of the farmers, for all that they were directly employed. The only reference to their payment is to be found in the Statute by which they were appointed, and this states that they were to be rewarded annually for their work and that they may not charge the Exchequer for preparing the requisite returns.¹²³ Although their remuneration was provided for, none of the Hampshire returns from approvers mention rewards and therefore there is no way of knowing what they were paid.

The profits of office of ulnagers, farmers or approvers are not apparent from the ulnage records in the Public Record Office. The only times when the rewards were stated were in some of the returns by ulnagers in the first decade under review. Even this does not help to determine the profit which might have been expected from office, because the ulnager had various expenses and the information needed to cost these is not available. The fact that, for most of the time, suitable office holders were found, means that the rewards must have been viewed as satisfactory to a sufficient body of men.

Geographical basis of Appointments

One of the duties of the central administration was to decide upon the size of units appropriate for the administration of the ulnage. A balance was needed between their being large enough to be cost effective, but not so large that the ulnager could not control the operation. There was also a need to have regard to local sensitivities. In 1394, when there was a major re-organisation and the operation was taken directly into government control, the basic unit was set at county

¹²¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.10 1453 June 1.

¹²² *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, pp.12-3 1453 July 13.

¹²³ *Stat. Realm 2*, 4 Edw IV cap.1 p.405. The clause stated that each approver was “To be rewarded yearly at his said account for his labour and diligence in this behalf, at the Receipt of the Exchequer by the discretion of the treasurer and barons without payment of anything in the Exchequer in or for the making of his said account”.

level. Each county had its own *ulnager*¹³¹, as did some of the large cloth manufacturing towns, such as Salisbury and Winchester. The exceptions were Surrey and Sussex which were always administered jointly, as were Rutland and Northamptonshire. Conversely, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire were initially administered at their sub-division or riding level.

By 1399, the uneconomic nature of some of these arrangements was apparent, and other counties were combined. Staffordshire was grouped with Shropshire briefly in 1399¹³² but this union did not last. Of a more permanent nature were the unions of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire in 1399¹³³. The counties of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire were joined briefly in 1399 and permanently in 1405.¹³⁴ Oxfordshire and Berkshire were joined from 1403¹³⁵ and Devon and Cornwall in 1405¹³⁶. Cumberland and Westmoreland were not mentioned in the *ulnage* records after 1406 and it is possible that they were administered from Northumberland. Generally speaking, the paired counties were amongst the smaller payers of *ulnage* fees. For example, Devon and Cornwall's farm in 1405 was set at £10, compared with Somerset's £107. The exception was Oxfordshire and Berkshire where the joint farm was set at £20 per annum in 1403.

Although amalgamations were often made because counties had too small an industry for a separate *ulnage* to be cost-effective, this was not always true. The counties of East Anglia formed a notable exception; as they were usually joined although the combinations varied over time. In 1394 the four counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Hertfordshire were *ulnaged* separately. In 1399 the farm for Essex and Hertfordshire was set, briefly, at £48.¹³⁷ In 1403 the farm for all four counties together was £135¹³⁸ and this rose to £140 in 1413.¹³⁹ There followed

¹³¹ It was essential to extend *ulnage* control throughout the country, even in counties with little or no commercial woollen cloth production; otherwise the duty could be evaded by selling untaxed cloths in unsupervised areas. In order to protect large sources of excise duty, it is still necessary to put resources into controlling small payers, even though the resource is barely cost-effective. This can be seen nowadays with betting shops. Most of the revenue comes from the national chains and costs very little to collect. Most of the staff cost of collecting this tax is devoted to ensuring compliance by the independent bookmakers who have one or two shops each.

¹³² *Cal. Fine Rolls XI, 1391-1399*, p. 305 1399 June 23.

¹³³ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, pp. 36-8 1399 Oct 17.

¹³⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, pp. 3608 1399 Oct 17, *XIII, 1405-1413*, pp. 9-10 1405 Nov 1.

¹³⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, p. 182 1403 Jan 13.

¹³⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIII, 1405-1413*, p. 9 1405 Nov 1.

¹³⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, p. 301 1399 May 18.

¹³⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, p. 184 1403 May 12.

¹³⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV, 1405-1413*, p. 9 1413 May 26.

a complicated dance of grants of farm to varying combinations of counties, or occasionally for a single county. In the 1450s the farm for the four counties was in excess of £162, and in the 1480s, with Cambridge and Huntingdonshire added on, the farm was charged at slightly above £166.¹³³

The pragmatic approach shown in the grouping of counties is also exhibited in the treatment of towns or other infra-county divisions. Initially most of the major cloth towns were ulnaged separately, as were the ridings of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. Bristol town and County were taxed separately in the early years. Gradually these divisions were abandoned. The separate ulnaging of Oxford¹³⁴ and Exeter¹³⁵, were each relinquished in 1399, Salisbury in 1402¹³⁶, and Winchester in September 1403.¹³⁷ Conversely, some towns which might have been expected to have a separate ulnage never did. Coventry was always taxed with its County, though it was specifically named in grants relating to Warwickshire after 1454, when the City achieved county status. Neither Norwich nor Newcastle-upon-Tyne ^{was} ~~were~~ ever administered separately although each was usually explicitly named in grants of their respective counties. This suggests that the relationship between those towns and their hinterlands was so close that it would not have made good economic sense to try to disentangle them. They were probably also mentioned explicitly so that there could be no doubt that the county ulnager's writ ran in the town or city as well as in the rest of the county, and the same applied to towns that had once had separate ulnagers. They were usually named specifically in the grants of office to the relevant county ulnagers. The divisions of Yorkshire were no longer ulnaged separately after 1403, although Lincolnshire was not administered as one unit until the 1450s. This suggests an excess of local pride, for the highest total amount of income from farm failed to reach £12, and that amount was only achieved during the years 1419 to 1423, when the farm for Holland was £8.

The Exchequer was prepared to accept local offers to farm the revenues for specific towns if this did not affect the overall income. Thus Sherbourne in Dorset had its own ulnager from

¹³³ This is in contrast with the south western counties where the farms were lower at the end of the period than at the beginning, although they still paid more money than East Anglia.

¹³⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, pp.26-8 .1399 Oct 17.

¹³⁵ This was not altogether a happy arrangement for Thomas Wandry, an Exeter man, was appointed and was blamed for the substantial drop in revenue that followed his appointment. This drop was so severe that three separate commissions of enquiry were appointed to discover the reasons. It appeared that he did not bother to collect the tax except in Exeter and thus all the cloth produced in the rest of County escaped the import. See R. Pearce Chope "The Aulnager in Devon" in *Transactions of the Devon Association*, 44 (1912) p.581.

¹³⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, p.182 1402 Dec 26.

1440 until 1458. This farm was held by Peter Bowman throughout the period at a fee of £1.¹³⁸ Since £1 represents the ulnage (although not the subsidy) on sixty cloths, it seems likely that the production in the town was not less than eighty cloths a year. Meanwhile, the farm for the rest of Dorset was £3 6s 8d.¹³⁹ The other long-running separate ulnage within a county was to be found in Suffolk. Between 1425 and 1455, five small places in Suffolk accounted separately from the rest of the County for a farm which started at £12 3s 4d and rose to £14 13s 4d, or the fees for 720 to 820 cloths.¹⁴⁰ This farm was started by two men acting as a partnership, and in 1432 passed to Thomas Cook. He held it on his own until 1451, when he was joined by Thomas Cook the younger.¹⁴¹ There were a few other local initiatives, but they were not successful and rarely lasted a twelvemonth, even if they were ever taken up.

The administrative pattern remained stable until the 1460s, although Somerset and Dorset were joined in 1458,¹⁴² and Wiltshire was amalgamated briefly with Bristol in 1459.¹⁴³ The major change came about with the appointment of approvers because they normally had the management of groups of counties. The first appointments of approvers, in 1464, were for single counties or pairs of counties, much as had gone before. It was not until the end of 1467 that groups of counties became commonplace. In that year Thomas Markham was appointed approver for Kent, Surrey and Sussex¹⁴⁴, and Richard More for Oxfordshire and Berkshire, Wiltshire, and Bristol.¹⁴⁵ Further groups were established in the late 1460s and were re-established or confirmed in the 1470s. There is a table of the larger groups in Appendix 6. Yorkshire was not apparently ever administered as part of a group in this period, although in Richard II's reign the four northern counties had been administered together for ulnage purposes in 1381.¹⁴⁶ A few smaller counties appear to have retained their farmers throughout

¹³⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, pp.232-3 1404 Jan 31.

¹³⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XVII, 1437-1445*, pp.155-6 1440 Jan 4; *XVIII, 1445-1452*, p.49 1447 July 16; p.107 1449 Feb 20.

¹³⁹ There had obviously been a catastrophic drop in production in Dorset, because in 1436 the farm for the County, including Sherbourne was set at £17 7s 8d.

¹⁴⁰ The places were Lavenham, Great Waldingfield, Little Waldingfield, Brent Ilegh, Acton.

¹⁴¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI, 1422-1430*, p.114 1426 Mar 7; *XVI, 1430-1437*, p.110 1432 Oct 11; *VII, 1437-1445*, p.64 1439 Jun 16, p.280 1443 Dec 3; *XVIII, 1445-1452*, p.243 1451 Oct 21.

¹⁴² *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.200 1458 May 15.

¹⁴³ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, pp.219-20 1459 Aug 26.

¹⁴⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.210 1467 Nov 22.

¹⁴⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.201 1467 Dec 7.

¹⁴⁶ John Lister, *The Early Yorkshire Woollen Trade* (York, 1924) p.115.



and never came under the sway of approvers. For example, Middlesex continued to be farmed for £1 per annum.¹⁴⁷

This re-arrangement of areas was the most radical re-organisation of the ulnage administration since the reforms of 1394. It took the administration away from a county-based structure to a regionally based one. Since the approvers could not possibly have carried out the detailed administration, they must have relied on deputies, whom they appointed and for whom they were responsible. Regional administration does not sit easily in England and the groupings of counties were highly unstable. For example, if we consider the career of Carus-Wilson's *bete noir*, Richard More, it is possible to see how groups of counties came together and dissolved again. He received seven different letters patent between 1467 and 1485 relating to the ulnage. Every one of these was for a different group of places; the first four of them were his appointments as approver and the subsequent three as farmer. The details are given in Appendix 7. In 1474 he was appointed approver for fourteen counties in the south of England and held that office for four years.¹⁴⁸

Once Parliament had forbidden the office of approver, More lost the responsibility for four of these counties, but became farmer for the remaining ten.¹⁴⁹ He continued to hold office until the reign of Henry VII, although his area of responsibility gradually diminished. In view of the strictures that Carus-Wilson placed upon More, it is interesting that, even when the office of approver was abolished, More was allowed to farm the ulnage of ten counties. More was not the only approver with wide responsibilities who continued as farmer. Some of those with more modest spans of control similarly changed role and continued with the work. For example, Thomas Hawkyns, the erstwhile approver for Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, continued as the farmer.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, Philip Knighton had been the approver for London, and in 1478 was appointed to the farm at a fee of £26 13s 4d.¹⁵¹ Nicholas Leventhorpe made the same change,

¹⁴⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.259. 1460 Jan 28. Walter Kynton was appointed for 20 years, and the next recorded appointment was made in October 1481. Presumably, the County was not placed under an approver because Kynton had a valid contract and there was no particular need to break it.

¹⁴⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, p.91. 1474 Nov 8. The counties were Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucester, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Bristol.

¹⁴⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, p.155. 1478 Jun 5. The counties were Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucester, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Bristol.

¹⁵⁰ *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, p.214. 1481 Aug 12.

¹⁵¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, p.154. 1478 May 9. In 1481 Oct 28 Knighton became farmer of London and Middlesex at a fee of £17 6s 8d, although this was increased to £27 6s 8d when it was granted to John Spencer on 28 Jan 1483.

being appointed farmer of Yorkshire at a farm of £67.¹⁵² Either there was extreme difficulty in finding people to take the responsibility, or the approvers and Richard More, in particular, were not held in such low esteem by his contemporaries as has been the case subsequently.

Conclusion

With relatively few exceptions, it seems likely that there were ulnagers, at least nominally in every part of England, so that everyone who was liable to pay the cloth tax was enabled to do so throughout most of the period. It seems likely that some of the ulnagers were not particularly energetic in the pursuit of their duties but there was complete coverage. At different times, in different places, the local official might be an ulnager reimbursed by the Exchequer; he might be a farmer paying an annual fee, or he might be an approver, who was also reimbursed at the discretion of the Exchequer.¹⁵³ In general, there seems to have been a sufficient number of men coming forward to administer the tax, and sometimes there were so many applicants that the posts in particular counties were the subject of competition.

The central government officials determined the units of administration of the ulnage and arranged for people to do the work. They appear to have been flexible in that they allowed counties to be administered jointly where it made good sense to do so, but they would also allow towns within a county to be administered separately if a suitable offer was made and it would not upset the arrangements for the rest of the county. From the structure of the administration, it is possible to see not only which were the important counties for the production of broadcloth, but also which towns were significant.

¹⁵² *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, p.154 1478 Mar 10. This appointment was made to Nicholas Leventhorpe jointly with Thomas Leventhorpe.

¹⁵³ See *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.156 1465 July 29.

Chapter 4 Officials and their Mainpernors

So far, the ulnage has been considered from a legal point of view and from the point of view of the national officials who administered the system. It is now necessary to consider the local officials who collected the subsidy and measured the cloths, who they were and what they did. In this chapter the social status and backgrounds of the ulnagers, and of their mainpernors, will be considered. It will be demonstrated that there was a shift through time in the type of men who became ulnagers away from local merchants to men associated with the court. The length of time which men spent in office and the reasons for continuity will be discussed. In the latter part of the chapter, the work of the ulnagers will be considered through the means of a case study of Hampshire. The status of ulnagers and their mainpernors will be compared with the national profile, and the reasons for differences discussed. The Hampshire ulnage records will be examined for evidence of how the ulnagers carried out their day-to-day duties. Finally, revenue fraud by cloth owners will be considered and the seizure of cloth will be discussed. The ulnagers were men, and they were all men, who assessed liability and collected the tax. Without them there would have been no royal income from the subsidy and the ulnage on cloth.

The Statute of Additions, 1413, required those coming before the courts to be identified by their "estate, mystery or degree".¹ However it did not apply to those seeking office, although proportionately more gave their occupation after 1413 than before; but the numbers are so low that it is obvious that the act had only a marginal effect in this sphere. The Act applied to mainpernors, however, and therefore much more is known about the mainpernors than would probably otherwise be the case.

The Ulnage Officials

The appointments of a thousand men were enrolled in the Fine Rolls, appointments which empowered them to administer the ulnage between 1394 and 1485. Of the ulnage officials, 133 men were described by reference to their location, 32 by their occupations and 12 by their posts in royal service. This amounts to 177 references, or 17%, but one or two men occur in two lists. For example, John Kingsmill, who became joint farmer of the ulnage for Oxford and Berkshire

¹ Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1990) p.15.

in 1407, was described as “of Oxford, draper”.² Although not all of the appointments were taken up, they are all valid when looking to see who was considered suitable to be an ulnager. They can be used to show who could become an ulnager and when. Thus, much can be learned by analysing the names and descriptions found in the Fine Rolls, even without having the benefit of detailed knowledge from other sources. Apart from those in Hampshire, ulnagers whose appointments were not enrolled are outside the scope of this work.

Domicile

Of the 1006 people whose appointments as ulnagers were enrolled, only 133, or 13%, gave their domicile. One hundred and three people were referred to by their location in the first 35 years, and only two of these gave places outside the county for which they were appointed. In the later period 30 men referred to their location, and 11 of these were from outside the county to which they were being appointed. Thus there is some evidence of a trend away from the appointment of local men. (This trend was accentuated by the appointments for groups of counties which become the practice after 1460.) It may be that men from outside the county had connections with the counties where they were appointed. Bearing in mind that many Londoners were often first generation settlers, they would have had roots elsewhere, and these may have influenced men in their choice of farm.

In some instances, appointments were made where it is difficult to imagine that the farmers had little, if any, direct involvement in the day-to-day work of the ulnage and such absence may well have caused inconvenience to the tax payers. For example, Thomas Knolles a grocer³ and Edmund Ekenay a draper, both of London, were jointly granted the farm of the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdonshire for ten years from 1445.⁴ In the event, Knolles was replaced after a year, and Ekenay was partnered by John Rede, whose domicile is not apparent.⁵ Unless they had trading connections in the area, it is a puzzle to understand why two Londoners wanted the office, and the fact that Knolles dropped out after a year shows that he did not find it beneficial. The farm for the two counties was only £1 10s 0d plus 1s increment. Another unlikely appointment was that of John Croke, a clerk of the Exchequer, as one of two farmers of

² *Cal. Fine Rolls XIII, 1405-1413*, p.50 1407 May 5.

³ Knolles was an alderman of London and a prominent member of the Grocers' Company. He contributed a chasuble and corporal of cloth of gold to enhance the religious observances of the Company. See Pamela Nightingale *A Medieval Mercantile Community: The Grocers' Company and the Politics and Trade of London 1000-1485* (London, 1995) p.415.

⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI-II, 1437-1445*, p.307 1445 Feb 8.

⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XVI-III, 1445-1452*, p.7 1446 Mar 15.

the counties of Devon and Cornwall in 1439,⁶ and it is difficult to imagine how he carried out his duties. He and his partner apparently held the office for seventeen years.⁷ Similarly, theirs was not a large farm since it was only £3 6s 8d plus an increment of 1s.

There are a few men who probably acted in more than one county, but they held by separate appointments, not appointments to groups of counties as happened in the later period. For example, Benet Broun was farmer for Kent in 1438 and Benet Broun esquire was farmer of Surrey and Sussex in 1446. It is possible that there were two men called Benet Broun who both farmed the ulnage, but it seems unlikely, unless they were relatives.

Occupations of Ulnagers

Because most of the letters patent wherein ulnagers were appointed did not give their occupation, there is no way of knowing whether those occupations that were stated are typical or not. The 32 whose occupations are given, have been classified into trade groups and are shown in Table 4-1 below. Of these 32 men, 22 were specifically involved in the cloth industry. The list was not made up wholly of fullers or weavers and, it will be seen that drapers form the largest group. The chandler and the taverner were both appointed for Winchester when the town council jointly put twelve names forward; so no conclusions can be drawn from their presence. Less easy to explain is the appearance of two fishmongers. Both served in London; William Parker, who was a stockfishmonger, served for nearly four years from July 1394,⁸ and John Prophet, a fishmonger, served for twelve years from 1413.⁹ (The average farm of the London ulnage was slightly above the national average at £33 6s 8d per annum.)

These snippets of information, which is all that 32 descriptions out of more than a thousand appointments can be called, serve to illustrate that the administration of the ulnage was not the sole preserve of men whose primary activity was in the cloth trade. Whereas those in the industry formed the largest group of those named, there were others. The grocer probably dealt in dye stuffs and his involvement in the cloth trade can be assumed. The presence of two

⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls* XVI/II, 1437-1445, p.64 1439 Aug 8.

⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls* XIX, 1452-1461, p.173 1456 Oct 18. It is possible that Croke financed the operation and his partner handled the day-to-day administration.

⁸ For details of his appointments see *Cal. Fine Rolls* XI, 1391-1399, pp.122-4 1394 July 20 and p.165 1395 Dec 2.

⁹ The records suggest that he was ulnager for 12 years from 1415. However, Nightingale says of him that he was infirm in 1414, although persuaded to continue in office as chamberlain of the City. See Pamela Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community The Grocers' Company and the Politics and Trade of London 1000-1485* (London, 1995) p.337. His appointment is recorded in *Cal. Fine Rolls* XIV, 1413-1422, p.10-1 1413 Nov 13.

fishmongers is less easy to explain for there was no particular reason for them to know about cloth. However, a knowledge of cloth only became important if the ulnager took a personal part in the assessment of tax, rather than arranging for others to do the work for him. The clerks may have been royal servants, who are discussed below. The term 'clerk' may also hide men who would later be called lawyers. There was an absence of men described as lawyers, although the Hampshire records reveal that some ulnagers were such. It would seem that where the ulnage attracted business men, it attracted men engaged in trade, rather than those who practised law.¹⁰ It is of course likely that detailed examination of local records, and of records of fifteenth-century London in particular would enable a much more detailed analysis to be made. For example Caroline Barron added information about the ulnagers appointed for London in 1439 when she wrote that the post went to two drapers.¹¹ These two men were Robert Shirborn and John Derby and they had secured the office by increasing substantially the amount of farm from £35 6s 8d to £40.¹² The administration of the ulnage did not attract the great merchants of the City of London. One or two of the grocers became ulnagers, most notably Thomas Knolles who was joint ulnager for Cambridge and Huntingdon for one year in 1445.¹³ A few other London tradesmen held office, for example the draper John Gedney, who held the farm of Middlesex for ten years from 1443.¹⁴

¹⁰ Hicks has pointed out that lawyers could not be gentlemen under Richard II, whereas "by 1500 many people only marginally engaged in legal work adopted the description as a means to financial and social advancement"; so it may be that lawyers were not attracted to the ulnage, or it may be that people who became ulnagers preferred other self-descriptions than that of lawyer where they had any choice. See Michael Hicks ed., *Profit, Piety and the Professions in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1990) p. xxv.

¹¹ Barron wrote, "The new charter (1438) did not specifically grant the Drapers the right to search for defective cloth in the City, but the King appointed two Drapers as ulnagers in London. ... Although the ulnagers were concerned with money, and not with defects of quality or workmanship, the grant of the office to two Drapers in February 1439 was regarded by their company as a considerable 'coup' and was greatly displeasing to the Tailors." Caroline M. Barron "Ralph Holland and the London Radicals 1438-1444" in: Richard Holt and Gervase Rosser, ed., *The Medieval Town 1200-1500* (London, 1990) p.276.

¹² *Cal. Fine Rolls XI-II, 1437-1445*, p.63 1439 Feb 16.

¹³ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI-II, 1437-1445*, p.307 1445 Feb 8.

¹⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI-II, 1437-1445*, p.259 1443 July 4. Gedney was a major trader in dyestuffs, bringing them overland from Southampton. See Pamela Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community, The Grocers' Company and the Politics and Trade of London 1000-1485* (London, 1995) p.437.

Sector	Occupation	Number	Year of Appointment
<i>Commerce</i>	Chandler	1	1462
	Grocer	1	1445
	Merchant	4	1453, 1453, 1459, 1459
<i>Fabrics</i>	Draper	11	1407, 1410, 1413, 1413, 1421, 1425, 1432, 1443, 1443, 1445, 1453
	Fuller	1	1423
	Mercer	2	1394, 1419
	Tailor	4	1472, 1483, 1483, 1483
	Tanner	1	1452
<i>Other</i>	Clerk	4	1408, 1408, 1410, 1452
	Fishmonger	2	1395, 1413
	Taverner	1	1462
Total		32	

Source: *Calendar of Fine Rolls*

Table 4-1 Status of Ulnagers

The evidence is that the ulnagers, while being of substantially higher social status than that of artisan, were at best minor gentry or fair-sized men in local merchant communities. They were certainly not the greatest men in any sphere. For example, the substantial importers through Southampton did not become ulnagers. This finding is comparable with the conclusions of Saul in his study of fourteenth-century gentry in Gloucestershire¹⁵. He found that by 1400 major shire offices were held by rich local gentry. Below them "A hierarchy (was) established between the various offices. The coroner carried little esteem; he was on a par with the assessors and collectors of parliamentary subsidies". The ulnage, which he did not discuss, was probably at the lower end of this spectrum, but slightly aside from it because of its mercantile and trade connections. Nonetheless, as Kowalski found in her study of Exeter, the ulnagers were not insubstantial.¹⁶ She wrote that

the influence of the Exeter oligarchy was also substantially reinforced by frequent appointments to royal offices like controller, customer, havener, and ulnager. The appointments, generally available only to Rank A members of the oligarchy, endowed their

¹⁵ Nigel Saul, *Knights And Esquires: The Gloucestershire Gentry in the Fourteenth Century* (Oxford, 1981) p.163.

¹⁶ Maryanne Kowalski, "The Commercial Dominance of a Medieval Provincial Oligarchy: Exeter in the late fourteenth century" in Richard Holt and Gervase Rosser ed., *The Medieval Town 1200-1500*. (London, 1990) p.194.

holders not only with political pull but also with additional opportunities for financial gain (either legal or illegal).

It will be shown later that this description of the ulnagers in Exeter applies equally well to those of Winchester.

These were the marginal “gentry”, who took on official posts because they needed the money. Dyer compared their financial realities with those of the higher aristocracy and mentioned particularly the pressures on them to take posts that would bring in additional money. He referred to agricultural management or legal practice as sources of income suitable for a gentleman, but the ulnage was another option, fulfilling the same role of augmenting their incomes in a socially acceptable way. He wrote¹⁷

Whereas the higher aristocracy could easily economise on the cost of meals, or by cutting down on their servants and visitors, or abandoning surplus manor houses to fall into ruin, an esquire or gentleman on £20 or £10 a year who was employing only three servants and living in one house, and whose meals were devoid of much luxury in the way of wine or spices, had little room for manoeuvre. They must have cut back, or even cut out completely their occasional wine-bibblings, and avoided travel where possible, but too many economies of this kind might force them to drop out of the aristocracy, and accept yeoman status. Perhaps the answer to the problem of the gentry’s social survival as consumers and in many cases, their expansion, lies in their eligibility for sources of income unavailable to the higher aristocracy, such as their profits from direct agricultural management and earnings from legal practice, so they did not so often have to make such hard decisions about spending cuts.

It is quite apparent that some of them, in the fifteenth century, saw the ulnage as one way of raising additional income. It is noticeable that there were far more men described by social status in the later part of the period than the early part. It is difficult to be sure how much this arises from fashions in self-description, and how much it arises because the status of the men taking office had changed. In any case, the small number of tradesmen whose occupations are given makes any comparison unreliable.

Those ulnagers who described themselves by their social status are listed in Appendix 8. Most of the men whose social status is given are described as “esquire”. As has already been pointed out, some of the esquires may be courtiers. Apart from Edmund, Duke of Somerset, the only members of the peerage who farmed the ulnage were found in Yorkshire and this probably says

¹⁷ Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1990) p.107-8.

more about the politics of the north than about the ulnager. The noble ulnagers of Yorkshire include Ralph, Lord Cromwell,¹⁸ John, Earl of Shrewsbury¹⁹ and John, Marquis Montagu. Montagu, as John Neville, knight, held office in Yorkshire in 1454 for just over a year.²⁰ His second appointment was in 1461, by which time he was Lord Montagu and referred to as the king's kinsman.²¹ This appointment which was "for life" lasted for about seven years, when Thomas Treygot was appointed approver.²² Neville was re-reinstated as farmer in 1470,²³ by which time he was Marquis Montagu. This appointment was short-lived because in March 1472 his widow, Isabel, was granted an annuity partly from the ulnager of Yorkshire.²⁴ The other conspicuous exception to the ranks of esquires and gentry who held office of ulnager was Edmund, Duke of Somerset, who was appointed to the farm of Suffolk and Essex in autumn 1451.²⁵ Apparently he continued to hold office during the period of his imprisonment for more than a year from November 1453, because no other ulnager seems to have been appointed until after his death in May 1455.²⁶

The mid-1450s saw several farmers of the ulnager from the great families of the land, in a way that was not apparent at other times. Apart from Neville and Somerset, John Bourchier, half brother of the Duke of Buckingham, succeeded the Duke of Somerset as ulnager of Suffolk and Essex, together with the additional County of Norfolk, his first appointment being made in 1455.²⁷ Richard Roos, knight, was appointed joint ulnager of Northampton and Rutland in 1454.²⁸ He was a member of one of the great families who allied with Henry VI and whose lands were forfeit to Edward IV.²⁹

¹⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.104 1455 Aug 5.

¹⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.104 1455 Aug 5.

²⁰ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.103 1455 July 28. The appointment was backdated to 1454 Aug 1.

²¹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Edw IV, Hen VI, 1461-1467*, p.130 1461 July 18. The use of the Patent Rolls for this purpose was unusual at this time.

²² *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.221 1468 Nov 12.

²³ *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.277 1470 Dec 20.

²⁴ *Cal. Pat. Rolls Edw IV, Hen VI, 1467-1471*, p.335 1472 Mar 19.

²⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI/III, 1445-1452*, p.243-4 1451 Dec 18. The appointment was backdated to Michaelmas.

²⁶ The imprisonment is discussed in Ralph A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI*, (London, 1981) pp.721,744-5.

²⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.104 1455 June 9.

²⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.103 1454 Dec 30.

²⁹ C.D. Ross, "The Reign of Edward IV", S.B. Chrimes et alii ed., *Fifteenth-century England* (Stroud, 1995) p.55.

Few men were so described as either gentlemen or esquires in the ulnager records before the 1440s. The increased use of such descriptions may have come about because those titles were applied lower down the social scale than had previously been the case, rather than it being a sign that ulnagers were becoming more elevated.

Royal Servants

A number of these men were household servants of the king. It is noticeable that during the fifteenth century there was a shift in origins of the ulnagers, as more courtiers were appointed to office than had been the case earlier; it is apparent that farming the ulnage was seen as worthwhile by the staff of the royal household. Nine of the ulnagers described themselves in a way which means that they were royal servants, and it is likely that some of the men described in the table above as “esquire”, were in royal service. Ralph Griffiths has been very critical of Henry VI and his policy of appointing courtiers to local offices, when he could have secured the loyalty of the provincial gentry through judicious use of patronage.³⁰ One of the outstanding features of Henry VI’s court was the large number of men who attended him and his partisan treatment of them when it came to dispensing favours.³¹ Griffiths wrote that the “golden age of the household official” was not brought to an end before the king’s illness in the summer of 1453. He was considering the whole range of royal patronage and was making a general judgement of some of the ills of Henry VI’s administration. Henry VI was not unique in this, but he was more obviously partisan than other monarchs. There were nine men who were specifically described in the Fine Rolls as court officials and, as is shown in Appendix 9, they were appointed at various times, and not all in the reign of Henry VI.

The positions at court held by men who became ulnagers were below the status of nobles, but ranked higher than those who did the menial work. Their incomes were not vast but they had sufficient means to persuade the Exchequer that they were financially sound enough to take on the office of ulnager. It is also true that royal servants were not paid regularly. In 1449, the men of the royal household had petitioned parliament for arrears of wages, overdue by several years

³⁰ Ralph A Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI*, (London, 1981) p.333. He wrote “The king’s promotion to office of loyal and valued servants knew few bounds. Little account was taken of the nature of the office involved ... To employ loyal men from among the country gentry or less in offices in their own localities would facilitate the co-ordination of the realm’s administration, ensure an effective and resident officialdom, and encourage obedience to instructions - considerations that were important to the central government and took account of the needs of the locality itself. This presupposed, however, a sophisticated, integrated, and well-regulated national administration, and such notions did not receive a high priority from Henry VI or his advisers. Rather was the quality of England’s governors allowed to evolve in response to the private desires of those closest to the king or working in his household as they sought advancement and employment for their dependants, friends, servants and connection by every available means.”

³¹ Ralph A Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI* (London, 1981) p.333.

and amounting to over £3800.³² They therefore had considerable incentive to find ways of augmenting their incomes. These retainers were mostly members of land-owning families, and their careers often included sitting in Parliament or holding office as sheriff.³³ Initially, Edward IV had in his household about 250 to 300 people above the menial status, and this number increased during his reign. For example, in 1468 he had 10 knights of the body; this number rose to 20 in 1471 and had reached about 30 by 1483. The number of esquires similarly increased during the reign to between 30 and 40.³⁴ That some of them were paid from the ulnage income is not surprising, but it was nowhere near sufficient to pay more than a fraction of the household staff. Even if the whole proceeds of the ulnage had been devoted to these retainers, it would have been insufficient to reward all of them.

There were other royal servants who were not described as such in their grant of administration of the ulnage. In particular some of those who described themselves as esquires or yeomen may have been attached to the royal household. The list in Appendix 9 only names those who are identified in the ulnage records in such a way that their attachment to the court is obvious. There are others whose affiliation were as close, but not identifiable from the ulnage records. One such was Thomas Tresham who was joint ulnager for Northamptonshire and Rutland in 1455.³⁵ He had been brought up in the royal household, and had served as sheriff of Cambridge

³² A.R. Myers, *The Household of Edward IV: The Black Book and the Ordinance of 1478* (Manchester, 1959) p.7. On page 17, note 1, Myers gave examples of the wage rates involved in the early part of the fifteenth century. He wrote that "the wage of the yeomen of the crown is stated to be 3d a day whereas many received 6d a day and the daily wage of squires of the body is said to be 7½d, whereas most received more than this." On page 226 he stated that the Ordinance of 1478 set the wages of the staff at different rates from these, as follows: "Every squyer at wages by the day, 6½d; euery yoman, aswelle yomen of the corone, yomen of the chambre, and yomen of houshold, at 3d, euery day; euery grome at 40s by the yere; euery page at 26s 8d by the yere." These rates can be compared with those of the skilled artisans of York. Heather Swanson has estimated that weavers in York in 1400 were paid between 6½d and 8d a day when in work, and building workers about 1½d a day less. (Heather Swanson, *Medieval Artisans* (Oxford, 1989) p.34.) E.F. Jacob quoted average rates for builders such as carpenters and masons as fluctuating around 7d a day in the fifteenth century. (E.F. Jacob, *The Fifteenth Century 1399-1485* (Oxford, 1961) p.384.) Thus the rates paid to royal servants was comparable with that of skilled artisans in the provinces. However the royal servants were probably paid for more days in the year, or at least their wages were owed for more days in the year, so in principle they could expect more income. In addition the royal servants undoubtedly had more benefits in kind than did weavers.

³³ Thrupp analysed the status of courtiers, and her work shows the sort of salary scales that were common. She quoted examples from John of Gaunt's household, but the figures that she gave were valid well into the fifteenth century. She wrote³³ "Senior posts in all important departments of estate and household service automatically carried with them titles of gentle rank. ... John of Gaunt's butler, master-cook and master carpenter each had the rank of esquire, as did his steward, his seneschal, and underseneschal and some of his porters, constables, and wardens of fees. Next below the rank of esquire was that of serjeant, traditional at court, or, in the fifteenth century, that of gentleman and gentlewoman ... The salaries paid at court, 6d a day for yeomen, 1s for serjeants and esquires, augmented by miscellaneous fees and perquisites, probably enabled mere yeomen to live and dress as well as or better than many country gentlemen. Favoured esquires with royal appointments might be granted life-annuities of up to about 40 marks a year." Sylvia Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London (1300-1500)* (Chicago, 1948) pp.240-1.

³⁴ Charles Ross *Edward IV* (London, 1974) p.323.

³⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, p.103 1454 Dec 30.

and Huntingdonshire in 1451-2.³⁶ Detailed examination of the Hampshire ulnagers has revealed that two of the early appointees, Sir William Sturmy and Henry Somer both had posts at court. They are discussed in the section on the Hampshire ulnagers, later in this chapter.

The Fine Rolls enabled nine attendants at court to be identified from the wording of their letters patent when they were appointed to administer the ulnage. It is likely that there were many more of like status. The records of Hampshire alone have shown two more as will be discussed later in this chapter, and further examination of suitable records would undoubtedly identify others. What is revealed here is a little of the web of patronage by which the medieval state was bound together. The ulnage records also show that towns became less important, and leading townsmen were less able, or less willing, to take up offices such as ulnager, and they were replaced by the gentlemen known to the king through his court. The pattern is consistent with the studies that show towns in decline in the fifteenth century.

Mainpernors

Every farmer had to find mainpernors to stand as surety for him. It was common to provide two mainpernors, but occasionally more were named. Most of the mainpernors were described by their location and sometimes by their social status as well. Some mainpernors became farmers and a few farmers became mainpernors, so it seems reasonable to assume that mainpernors and farmers were social equals, more or less, and likely to know each other, rather than mainpernors being found by external parties. It is not obvious how farmers found their mainpernors although some sought relations to act for them. The implications are that putative farmers asked their friends or business associates. There is not sufficient continuity or repetition of names of mainpernors to suggest that giving mainprise was a marketable commercial undertaking, as is currently undertaken by Guarantee Societies or as a banking service. Therefore, if mainprise had been given by men from within the county concerned, it is likely that the farmer was a local man. As has been stated, the information provided to meet the Statute of Additions was somewhat varied. Some people gave their trade, others their social status and some their domicile. Others identified themselves by their relationships such as "elder" or "younger" but this may be partly to avoid confusion where there was scope for ambiguity. Nonetheless, there is sufficient information to make some attempt at analysis worthwhile.

³⁶ Ralph A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI* (London, 1981) p.341.

Altogether there were 1143 named mainpernors, though this figure includes each incidence of a mainpernor, even if he was been named more than once. This approach is justified, because sometimes farmers who had their letters patent re-enrolled within a very short time had different mainpernors, which suggests that they had to re-negotiate the arrangements. It is also true that men were not always described in the same way. For example Richard Maryot acted on three occasions. In 1454 and 1459 he was described as “of London, gentleman”, but in 1456 he was “of Buckinghamshire, gentleman”.³⁷ These references are summarised in Appendix 10. Another example concerns Thomas Norton. This name occurred five times between 1406 and 1420,³⁸ in circumstances where it is not possible to be sure how many men were involved.

^s *Domicile of Mainpernors*

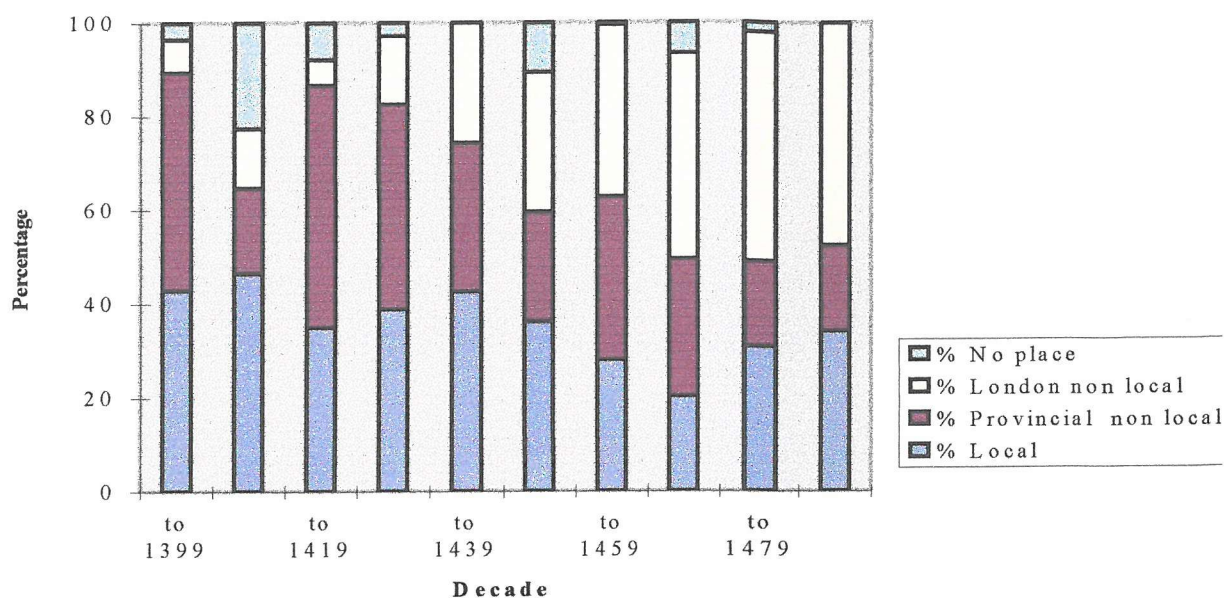
The stated domicile of each mainpernor has been compared with the counties for which they gave mainprise. The results are shown in Table 4-2 below. The domicile of the mainpernor will provide some evidence to show whether an ulnager was likely to be local or not. In particular it can be assumed that a shift towards using Londoners as mainpernors suggests a weakening of local ties.³⁹ The really striking thing about the figures is the trend away from local or provincial mainpernors to London ones. Of the 28 mainpernors who gave a location in the years between 1394 and 1399, 43% were local and 46% were provincial, although outside the county involved in the grant, and 7%, or two people were Londoners. The London proportion remained substantially below 20% until the 1430s and 1440s when it moved to the 30% mark. In the 1450s it moved to 37%, and for the last 25 years was well over 40%. Thus the increasing dominance of Londoners in the administration of the ulnage becomes apparent.

³⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIX, 1452-1461*, pp.102-3 1454 Dec 2; pp.218-9 1459 Jan 24; pp.142-3 1456 Feb 4.

³⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIII, 1405-1413*, p.49 1406 Oct 27; *XIV, 1413-1422*, p.10 1413 June 12; p.198 1418 Mar 16; pp.278-9 1419 Nov 22; and p.341 1420 Nov 6.

³⁹ In calculating the figures, a man was only counted as local if his location was within the same county as the area of farm. Thus a Londoner giving mainprise for Middlesex was counted as “London non-local”. Similarly Bristol was regarded as non-local to Somerset. In the case of Lincolnshire, where it was common for parts of the County to be administered separately, the nuances have been disregarded, and any part of Lincolnshire has been counted as ‘local’ to every other part of the County. In 1399 John Godeston and Thomas Thame both described themselves as ‘of London and Essex’³⁹ They have been counted as both ‘local’ and as “London non-local”. Where Londoners gave mainprise for London ulnagers, this is counted as ‘local’ and not as ‘London non-local’. Thus they were not counted in the ‘London’ total but in the local total.

Origins of Mainpernors



Source: *Calendar of Fine Rolls*

Table 4-2 Origins of Mainpernors (colour)

Percentages can be misleading because they can relate to two quite different sizes of figures. The actual figures are set out in Table 4-3 below. Although the numbers from the 1440s are much lower than those for any other whole decade, the table above shows that they are consistent with the decades either side of them. The figures were lower in the 1390s because directly employed ulnagers did not require mainprise. There is no obvious reason why there were so few mainpernors in the 1440s, except that there was no particular event in that decade which resulted in a large number of appointments over and above normal replacement. On the other hand, the same had been true of the 1430s.

Mainpernors					
Decade	Local	Non-local	London non local	No place	Total
1394-1399	12	13	2	1	28
1400-1409	62	24	17	30	133
1410-1419	44	65	7	10	126
1420-1429	40	45	15	3	103
1430-1439	58	43	35	0	136
1440-1449	34	22	28	10	94
1450-1459	48	60	63	1	172
1460-1469	33	48	72	11	164
1470-1479	44	26	70	3	143
1480-1485	15	8	21	0	44
	390	354	330	69	1143

Source: Calendar of Fine Rolls

Table 4-3 Relative Location of Mainpernors in Each Decade

Occupations of Mainpernors

The mainpernors came from a wider range of occupations than the farmers; some of them were workers in metal, which was not the case for any ulnager whose occupation was given. Occupations were stated for many more mainpernors than ulnagers, as Table 4-4 below shows. However, when the relative distribution between trade classes is examined, the two groups were very similar. Although there was a greater proportion of workers in the clothing industry who became ulnagers compared with the proportion who were mainpernors and no metal workers became ulnagers, against 7% who were mainpernors, there is a general similarity of interests; this adds weight to the hypothesis that mainpernors were found from amongst the farmers' existing circles of associates. Most of the men who described themselves as citizens, gave a trade description as well, but citizenship places them amongst the senior members of their communities. Dyer has commented that "membership of the upper strata of London society was indicated by such a title as 'citizen and draper'.⁴⁰ The figures showing occupation are displayed both as a table showing raw figures in Table 4-4 below and as percentages in a Table 4-5, following, so that comparisons can be made.

⁴⁰ Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1990) p.15.

Sector	Mainpernors	Ulnagers
Clothing	132	18
Commerce	54	6
Food	24	3
Metal	18	0
Other	40	5
TOTAL	268	32

Source: Calendar of Fine Rolls

Table 4-4 Relative Distribution of Trade Sectors for Mainpernors and Ulnagers

Comparison of Occupations of Mainpersnors and Ulnagers

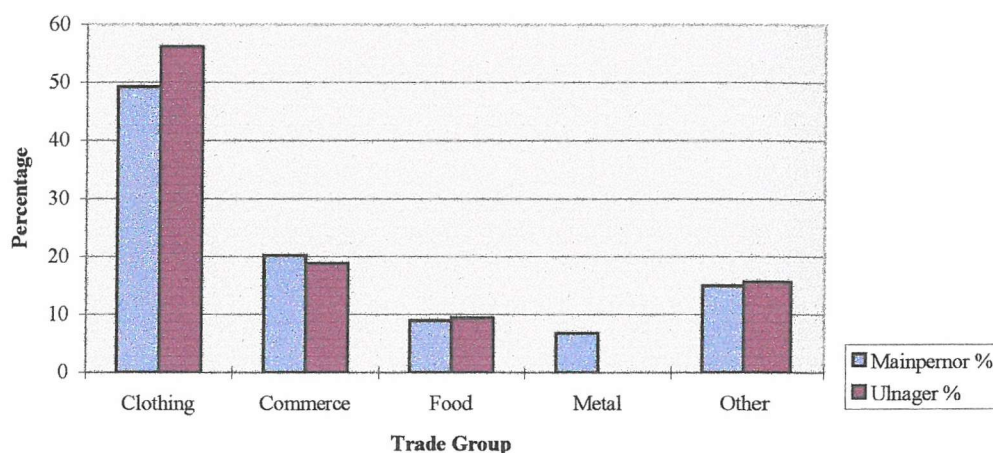


Table 4-5 Comparison of Occupations of Mainpernors and Ulnagers

Members of the royal household did not, on the whole, act as mainpernors. This suggests that as a group they needed to earn their livings and did not feel secure enough to stand guarantor even for their friends. In contrast, those Exchequer clerks listed in Appendix 5, were more often acting as mainpernors than taking office as ulnagers. It is likely that they were acting in their private capacities when they agreed to give mainprise because there were other occasions when mainprise said to be “found in the Exchequer”⁴¹. The implications are that they felt financially more secure than did many of the royal household.

⁴¹ This phrase suggests that the Exchequer waived the need for mainprise in practice, and carried its own risk.

Social Status of Mainpernors

A number of ulnagers and mainpernors were described by their social status. There is more difference in this area between ulnagers and mainpernors than in the other categories that have been reviewed. In particular more of the mainpernors than the ulnagers gave descriptions suggesting that they did not work for their livings. Of those who described themselves by social status, 68% of the mainpernors were described as gentlemen, but none of the ulnagers. This suggests that "gentleman" was more than a courtesy title in the fifteenth century, and was a statement of social standing. This suggestion is supported by Dyer who wrote that by 1463 an "extension of the social vocabulary had produced the word 'gentleman' to describe those of some standing who fell below the knights and esquires. Henceforth the 'gentry' or lesser aristocracy consisted of three ranks of knights, esquires and gentlemen".⁴² The description helps to place the social standing of those involved with the ulnage. Men who saw themselves as gentlemen did not become ulnagers. However, esquires felt no such inhibitions. Certainly, some esquires were specifically servants of the king, and some of the other men who called themselves "esquire" may also have been. Thus esquires seem to be "workers", unlike gentlemen who were not. The implication is that those men who described themselves as gentlemen, as a new social division, were probably less diverse in their income gathering than was later to be the case. Half the ulnagers described by social status were "esquires" compared with only 10% of the mainpernors.

Table 4-6 below compares the men who were described by their social status. The mainpernors came from a wider social basis, but it is interesting that more lords and knights were prepared to farm the ulnage than were prepared to act as mainpernors. It is also interesting that yeomen felt secure enough to give mainprise, but, with one exception, did not take on the office. (They give the impression of being the sort of men who in later generations became non-commissioned officers in the army. They had reasonable incomes and played a necessary part in the machinery of society without taking on the managerial positions held by officers.) The distinctions of urban status are too few to be significant. Relatively speaking more citizens became ulnagers than became mainpernors, but the figures are so small that it would be unwise to draw any firm conclusion from them. (The presence of one mayor is a chance mention as a number of the other citizens were mayors at various times.)

⁴² Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 199)) p.15.

Group	Description	Mainpernors	Ulnagers	Mainpernors %	Ulnagers %
County	lord		3		3
	knight	6	11	1	11
	chivaler	2		0	0
	esquire	56	55	10	54
	gentleman	370		68	0
	yeoman	89	1	16	1
Sub-total		523	70	97	69
Exchequer		4	2	1	2
Royal		6	17	1	17
Sub-total		10	19	2	19
Urban	citizen	8	12	1	12
	mayor		1	0	1
Sub-total		8	13	1	13
Total		541	102	100	100

Source: *Calendar of Fine Rolls*

Table 4-6 Social status of mainpernors and ulnagers

The Exchequer officials seem to have been of the same social class as many of the ulnagers and their sureties, the mainpernors. Occasionally, one of them stood as mainpernor for a farmer of the ulnage, and from time to time one of them became a farmer in his own right.⁴³ As was the case elsewhere in royal service, the Exchequer officials needed to be proactive on the king's behalf in order to keep the machinery of state functioning. Steel cites examples of the Exchequer clerks who actively sought out loans from their London friends. When quoting examples of loans procured for the king from private individuals, he mentioned William Kerver, who was responsible, on his own or with others, for loans totalling £2618. Steel described Kerver as a mercer whom he found in "association with a certain Reginald or Roger Appleton, who seems to have been an auditor of the Exchequer". Kerver was also associated with John Rogger, variously described as 'of London' and as holder of the office of treasurer's clerk at the receipt. It may be that one of the inducements that could be offered to lenders of money to the state was preferment for office. It seems that Appleton and Rogger rewarded Kerver for the loan because Kerver became approver of the lucrative ulnage of Somerset and Dorset between 1468 and 1470.⁴⁴ Steel continued by writing that

⁴³ The Exchequer officials are listed in appendix 5, with brief biographical notes.

⁴⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.210 1468 Feb 12.

if the identities of Appleton and Rogger as Exchequer officers can be taken as established, it certainly looks as if one function of Edward IV's senior clerks in that department ... was to persuade their wealthy London friends, ... to lend him money, or, quite possibly to join with themselves in a profitable syndicate for the purpose.⁴⁵

Roger Appleton audited many of the ulnager returns in a lifetime's service to the crown between 1414 and 1467.⁴⁶

Edward IV's relationships with his Exchequer would repay further study. On the one hand he introduced a system whereby approvers were appointed, a system whereby detailed administration was taken away from the Exchequer. On the other hand, his senior civil servants were arranging loans for him. The approvers seem not only to have collected revenue, but also to have disbursed it to the appointed recipients. It seems unlikely that the Exchequer staff would have been enthusiastic about this practice, for separation of receipts, payments and accounting are fundamental to revenue management. However, in the context of the administrative chaos of the last years of Henry VI's reign, and the years of Edward IV's reign, it may be that this scheme, whereby the practical administration of the receipt and payment of the revenue was contracted out away from London, was seen as one way of keeping some continuity, and of relieving the burden on the Exchequer clerks.

Personal Ties

A close match between ulnagers and mainpernors is more clearly demonstrated when the names of the two groups are examined for replication. A total of 151 surnames can be found more than once, if both the list of officials and the list of mainpernors are considered. Some of these duplicated names are obviously of unrelated people, or people who, even if they were blood relations, are so distant in place or time that the relationship is untraceable. Others of these duplicated names arise because a man is named more than once, and some of the repetitions relate to close kin of those already named. For example, if surnames which start with letter M are considered, 31 surnames occur more than once when both lists are considered.⁴⁷ There are 96 references to these 31 surnames, and they probably refer to 44 people. Of the 31 repeated names, 19 of them are found in only one list, but 12 are found in both lists. This shows that,

⁴⁵ Anthony Steel, *The Receipt of the Exchequer 1377-1485* (Cambridge, 1954) p.346

⁴⁶ This may be one man, but it is possible that there were two Appletons, father and son.

⁴⁷ There were 74 names beginning with 'M' in the list of ulnagers and 70 mainpernors, making 144 in all.

once obvious co-incidences have been eliminated, there is a degree of kinship between farmers and mainpennors, and a number of individuals who occur more than once.

One probable example of repetition is Richard Maffen of Shrewsbury, gentleman, who acted as mainpennor for Richard Bullesdon, in both 1444 and 1446.⁴⁸ Conversely, the John Manning, haberdasher of London, who was a mainpennor in 1471 is unlikely to be the same man as the John Manning of Buckinghamshire, gentleman, who had acted for Robert Charyngworth in 1431.⁴⁹ The nine references to John Maunche between 1451 and 1461, bidding for the farms of Wiltshire and Somerset, are likely all to be to the John Maunche who in 1453 was described as “of London, draper”.⁵⁰

Some surnames hint at a more complicated arrangement. In 1461, William Mannyngham, gentleman of London stood as mainpennor for John Mannyngham who wished to be farmer of Wiltshire.⁵¹ It is probable that John and William were related. John Mannyngham of Wrestlingworth Bedfordshire, esquire, gave mainprise for John Maunche in Wiltshire in 1454 and in Somerset in 1461. The ulnager records do not show whether he was the same John Mannyngham as had bid for the farm of Wiltshire, or a relation, or whether the occurrence of the name was a co-incidence.

In the examples discussed above, some cases have been cited where men sought office in more than one county. This was atypical. Even where ulnagers sought appointment more than once, they rarely changed county, and such change was not found before the 1450s. It seems probable that there was only one John Bethom who, in 1464, was appointed as joint ulnager in each of Hampshire, Oxford and Berkshire, and Wiltshire. There are other examples which are less clear cut, of which Peter Bowman is the most difficult. The detailed references to this name are summarised in Appendix 10, and they illustrate the difficulties that would be encountered if an attempt were made to count people rather than the incidence of names.

⁴⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls* XI-II, 1437-1445, pp.280-1 1444 May 27; XI-III, 1445-1452, p.50, 1446 Dec 12.

⁴⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls* XXI, 1461-1471, p.17 1471 June 13; XI-I, 1430-1437, p.72 1431 Sept 1.

⁵⁰ *Cal. Fine Rolls* XI-III, 1445-1452, pp.193-4 1451 June 26; XIX, 1452-1461, p.10 1453 May 16; p.12 1453 June 17; pp.12-3 1453 July 13; p.62 1453 Nov 3; pp.63-4 1453 Dec 8; p.63 1454 May 9; XX, 1461-1471, p.25 1461 Nov 26; p.26 1461 Dec 14. As has already been stated, this name was spelt as Manuche and Maunche in the Calendar of Fine Rolls.

⁵¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls* XIX, 1452-1461, p.26 1461 Dec 14.

These examples show that there was an overlap of functions and that the men who held office could be related to each other or to their mainpennors. They could move from ulnage to mainprise or the other way. There was a community of second-rank merchants and their social equivalents on whom the administration of the ulnage was laid, rather in the way in which solicitors traditionally acted as town clerks or solicitors act as coroners to this day. The "aristocrats" of the merchant class were not involved with the ulnage. For example, the names of the big importers through Southampton were not found in the ulnage administration. Similarly, a search through London records did not find the leaders of London merchant society involved. Becoming an ulnager was not an appointment which was sought by potential or actual Lord Mayors of London, nor the aldermen there. It was the community of merchants in the strata below this rank who benefited from the ulnage administration. They are men who do not attract individual attention in general histories of the fifteenth century, but who may feature as part of the crowd in local or specialised studies. Even the court officials who were involved in the ulnage were too junior to be mentioned by name in studies of Edward IV's court.⁵²

Office holding

It is possible from the records to gain some idea of how long ulnagers held office, and also whether they served alone or in partnerships. These issues will be considered next.

Length of Tenure

The question of long periods of office holding has been touched upon in the context of 'missing' ulnagers. The significance of long spells in office can only be judged when a normal or customary length has been established. Some farmers were appointed for long periods, but length of appointment and time served in the office do not bear a close relationship. For example, of the 30 grants which were apparently taken up in respect of the ulnage in London, eight had no time limit specified, seven seem to have lasted for the full time, two ran over and thirteen were surrendered before the grants had expired. Of the two that ran over, one of them, the farm held by Robert Shirborn and John Derby, was enrolled in 1439 and was due to last ten years: it appears though to have lasted for 17, which suggests another grant or an extension was granted but not enrolled. London is not untypical in this pattern.

The average length of tenure for all appointments, for the whole time period was 3.7 years. The counties whose average length of holding exceeded this, tended to be those where the annual

⁵² See for example A.R. Myers, *The Household of Edward IV: The Black Book and the Ordinance of 1478*, (Manchester, 1959).

farm rents were less than £10. In particular, the period before 1403 saw many changes of office holder and few officials held for more than three years. The 1390s were a time when many ulnagers served for relatively short times, but after 1403 there was a period of stability, which was only disrupted by the death of Henry IV. Many farmers failed to complete their contracted number of years and many others failed to renew their contracts which points to the idea that the profits of the ulnage were more apparent than real. A few men found it a worthwhile occupation, while others were drawn to it without being in a position to administer it profitably, or as profitably as they had hoped.

Ninety-three men, or about 9% of all officials, held office for more than ten years, three times the overall average. Most long-term appointments arose in the years between 1410 and 1440. This was partly because Henry V does not seem to have been very interested in the ulnage and partly because, during the minority of Henry VI, the function did not attract much attention; so there was no particular impetus to disrupt settled arrangements. Every single county had at least one long-serving ulnager during the period and some of these served for a very long time, although this period of stability was not re-established after the 1450s. The failed experiment of appointing approvers was partly to blame for the amount of change in the last 25 years under review. There is a caveat, however, in respect of some appointments, for which it is not possible to be certain whether an official had a long spell in office or whether there was no valid appointment for the post in question. Chope has stated that, when John Thorn was appointed ulnager for Devon in 1435, the ulnage had not been collected for some years previously.⁵³ It is always possible that there were similar omissions in other counties and that apparently long appointments were normal appointments followed by vacancies.

It is also obvious that not all appointments were enrolled. For example, Thomas Pontesburi and Thomas Cees were appointed to administer the ulnage in Lincoln and Kesteven, Lincolnshire, from 1418 for a period of ten years.⁵⁴ No further enrolment is to be found for either Lincoln or Kesteven until June 1437, a period of 19 years. Therefore, either an appointment was made for the extra nine years, or the ulnage post was unfilled. The new farmers were John Denton and Ralph Hert, who were appointed for seven years.⁵⁵ The next enrolled appointment was made

⁵³ R. Pearce Chope "The Ulnager in Devon" in *Transactions of the Devon Association* 44, (1912) p.583. He stated that there was another gap in appointment after 1436, but the Fine Rolls show that Bernard Brocas and John Croke were appointed in 1439, so he may not be correct in the latter case.

⁵⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV, 1413-1422*, p.252 1418 Jul 20.

⁵⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI-1, 1430-1437*, p.309 1437 June 18.

14 years later, in 1451, when Ralph Hert was appointed to act on his own.⁵⁶ In this case, it seems likely that the original grant of office was renewed and that there was so little competition for the post that Denton and Hert did not feel the need to safeguard themselves by going to the expense of having their indentures enrolled.

Partnerships

In three-quarters of cases, the official who administered the ulnage acted singly. Nearly a quarter (23%) of appointments were held by pairs and the remainder (five appointments) were in groups greater than two. On the whole, there is no clear determining factor which enables a prediction to be made about the likelihood of a partnership being the preferred option. There is a tendency for counties that had been subdivided for ulnage administration to be more likely to have a partnership than not, and this seems to carry more weight than the joint administration of two counties. For example, Wiltshire had 13 partnerships out of 32 enrolled appointments. Salisbury had been administered separately from 1394 until 1404. Yorkshire had 9 partnerships out of 23 appointments. Not only had York been administered separately during the first decade following 1394, but so had the individual Ridings. Devon and Cornwall is an example of two counties administered together, but, for a few years, Exeter had been administered separately from the rest of Devon. The two counties had 25 partnerships out of 30 appointments (83%), which fits the generalisation about sub-division of counties better than the comment about pairs of counties. Conversely, no towns in Hertfordshire or Somerset were mentioned by name and these two counties had the next highest proportions of partnerships (59% and 51% respectively). When pairs of counties are examined, the list of appointments shows that Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, and Surrey and Sussex, although normally ulnaged together, had very low proportions of partnerships.

Perhaps surprisingly, there is little correlation between size of farm and partnerships. For example, Somerset, which had the largest average farm, had 51% of its appointments as partnerships, but Staffordshire, where the average farm was only £1 18s 2d, had 38% of its ulnage administered by partners. By contrast Warwickshire, where the average farm was £35 17s 8d, had only four partnerships out of thirty appointments. Thus there is no clearly apparent reason determining partnerships, although there was a tendency for there to be more partnerships in counties where there was a major town with a particular importance for cloth.

⁵⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls* XLIII, 1445-1452, p.194 1451 July 9.

Hampshire in detail

How then does Hampshire compare with the national picture? Working from the Fine Rolls, it has been possible to establish a general picture of the type of people who became ulnager and how the backgrounds of these people changed with time. By consulting the Fine Rolls and other county-specific material, it has been possible to draw a more detailed picture of the ulnagers who served in Hampshire and of their mainpernors.

In all, during the period studied, Hampshire was administered for 9 years by ulnagers, for 70 years by farmers and for 13 years by approvers, these posts being filled by 43 different men. In this the county fits the standard profile and is unremarkable. The type of appointment changed from one to another at the times when such change could be expected. Until 1403 Winchester was ulnaged separately. From 1403 until 1463, Hampshire and Winchester were farmed as one. In 1463 approvers were appointed and from 1467 Hampshire was administered jointly with other counties, the years following 1467 being the years of amalgamation into regional administration. In this there is again nothing unusual and Hampshire formed part of the national trend. In 1484, there was an appointment of a separate farmer for Southampton but no return from him was included on the Ulnage Roll, and it is unlikely that he assumed his duties.

Of the 43 men who had their names enrolled in connection with the administration of the ulnage in Hampshire, Winchester or Southampton, two probably never assumed office. One was John Walker who was appointed farmer for Southampton alone in 1484,⁵⁷ and the other was Vincent Pittlesden, who was appointed approver in 1471.⁵⁸ Conversely, two men rendered returns who did not have letters patent enrolled granting them authority to assume office. They were Nicholas Tanner who submitted the return as ulnager for Winchester for the period 2 May 1398 to 7 February 1399⁵⁹ and Henry Joce who was ulnager for the County for one year from 1 May 1398.⁶⁰ Thus there was a total of 45 men involved as office holders, and they were guaranteed by a total of 41 mainpernors.

⁵⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, p.266 1484 Mar 7.

⁵⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.17 1471 Aug 18.

⁵⁹ Ulnage Roll E 358/8 m 11.

⁶⁰ Ulnage Roll E 358/8 m 8.

Domicile

It is possible to determine where most of the officials and most of their mainpernors lived. The men involved with the ulnage in Hampshire were much more locally based than was true of many counties. As will be demonstrated later, this came about because of the concern shown by the Corporation of the City of Winchester, to which much of the king's income from the ulnage was paid. The ulnagers can be sub-divided into four groups. There are those who came from Winchester and dealt with the ulnage of Winchester. There are those who came from Winchester and dealt with the ulnage of the City and the County. There are those who lived outside Winchester and dealt with the County but not the City, and finally there are the men who were not from Hampshire at all. As will be shown, the mainpernors can be classified in the same way.

It is possible to determine the domicile of most of the local ulnagers from their context even when their names cannot be found in contemporary, non-ulnage, records. For example, all twelve joint ulnagers of 1462 can be assumed to have been Winchester men. Many of the Hampshire men who were ulnagers were the holders of various public offices, either in the City or in the County, and the majority were Winchester men. Of the 43 men named in appointments, 37 lived within Hampshire or held property there. One came from Wiltshire, one was possibly from Berkshire, and there are four who have not been traced. No figures have been calculated to analyse the national pattern of domicile of ulnagers because there is insufficient information in the Fine Rolls. The list of Hampshire ulnagers, and their mainpernors, is given in Appendix ¹¹13.

Hampshire and Winchester were ulnaged separately until 1403. The City was served by seven separate ulnagers between 1394 and 1404, namely John Skillyng, John Champflour, John Fromond, John Dollyng, Nicholas Tanner, John Stere, and Robert Archer. It is possible to trace six of these seven men; only John Skillyng's name is not to be found in the published local records of the period, but since he was ulnager for Winchester in 1394, it would be very surprising if he were not living in the City.

The others emerge as wealthy men, some of them owning property in the County as well as the City, and some of them holding other public offices at various times. For example, John Champflour held property in Winchester, Ropley, Alton and Guildford, and was Sheriff of

Hampshire in 1401-2⁶¹. He described himself as an innkeeper because he owned the inn in Winchester called 'le Chekyr'.⁶² John Fromond lived at Sparsholt, although he owned land in various parts of the County.⁶³ He was Steward of Winchester College and bailiff of several episcopal manors.⁶⁴ John Stere served as MP for the City: he was also clerk of the City and supervisor of work on the city walls.⁶⁵ Robert Archer was variously described as a merchant, a vintner, and a butcher: he was a bailiff of Winchester, MP for Winchester and a member of the City corporation.⁶⁶ Nicholas Tanner, whose appointment was not enrolled, was a vintner, and a wool dealer, who also served as the city's MP: at one stage he was supervisor of King's Mill.⁶⁷ Finally, there was John Dollyng, who held no civic office: he was an innkeeper and in 1394 paid the subsidy and ulnage of forty cloths, so was clearly a wealthy man.⁶⁸ Thus the men who became ulnager for the City in the years between 1394 and 1404, were all men of substance, and some of them very wealthy. They are characterised by the diversity of their interests. Some of them held land, and some of them had business interests, while several of them had both. In addition, most of them found time to hold a variety of public offices.

The County ulnagers, who were contemporary with these men, were also men of substance, who held other public offices. No town other than Winchester produced a significant number of ulnagers. Two officials had roots in Alton, and a third lived nearby, but nowhere else produced even two. One prominent Altonian who became an ulnager was William Sturmy, often called Sir William Sturmy.⁶⁹ He is an example of a court official who benefited from the ulnage. His main home was in the Alton area, but he also owned property in Winchester.⁷⁰ Sturmy was steward of Southampton on behalf of Queen Joan, who held the town as part of her dowry.⁷¹ John Balon, who held the office of ulnager for Hampshire in the 1390s and early

⁶¹ WS ii p.1189.

⁶² WS ii Item 69, p.500.

⁶³ WCM *passim*.

⁶⁴ WS ii p.1236. There was another John Fromond, a weaver in Winchester, who is found in the records between 1409 and 1429, but it seems unlikely that weaver Fromond was the ulnager in 1395.

⁶⁵ WS ii p.1357.

⁶⁶ WS ii p.1148.

⁶⁷ WS ii p.1364.

⁶⁸ WS ii p.1216.

⁶⁹ He was ulnager for Hampshire for eighteen months between 1395 and 1397. His appointment was enrolled in the Fine Rolls on 22 Nov 1395. (*Cal. Fine Rolls XI, 1391-1399*, p.165.)

⁷⁰ WS ii *passim*

⁷¹ This may also be the William Sturmy or Esturmy, described as chivaler, who represented Wiltshire in Parliament on at least three occasions between 1389 and 1401. See *A list of the representatives in Parliament from 1295-1832 for the County and boroughs of Wiltshire as*

1400s, also came from the Alton area. He was probably the son of John Balon of Hawkley from whom he inherited lands in Hawkley and Newton Valence.⁷² He rented some property in Winchester, but only incidentally as he did not become prominent there.⁷³ The other two early County ulnagers were Henry Joce and John Wallop. Henry Joce, who was bailiff of Andover, was ulnager for the County between May 1398 and May 1399, although no letters patent were enrolled.⁷⁴ John Wallop, who described himself as “of Over Wallop” likewise came from within the County. He was County ulnager between 1394 and 1395.⁷⁵

From 1403, the County and City were farmed jointly, usually by partnerships. One of the first farmers was Henry Somer, who was ulnager in 1404.⁷⁶ He usually lived in London,⁷⁷ although he had connections with Hampshire. He married the daughter of Mark le Faire, the prominent citizen of Winchester from whom he had bought property in Winchester as well as the manor of Freefolk.⁷⁸ Somer, like William Sturmy, was associated with the court, being a representative of the king’s chief butler. It may be that other courtiers who took on ulnage farms were attracted to counties where they had connections, as has been shown with Sturmy and Somer.

Apart from Somer, nearly all the farmers of the ulnage between 1403 and the mid-1460s were prominent citizens of Winchester. They owned substantial properties, mostly in the City, and

given in the *Parliamentary return of 1972. I (1295-1702)* Transcribed by Canon F.H. Manley. *Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine*, 1935-1937 47 pp.177-264.

⁷² WCM *passim*

⁷³ WS ii Item 160, p.568.

⁷⁴ Ulnage Roll E 358/8 m 8. The description of him as Bailiff is given in WCM 2451.

⁷⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI, 1391-1399*, pp.122-4 1394 July 20.

⁷⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, p.232 1404 Jan 31. He held office jointly with John Stere, and their appointment was backdated to 29 September 1403. At a date which is not clear, but may be in the regnal year 1406/7, John Medawe their deputy, submitted an account for cloth which they had seized. It was very uncommon for a deputy to submit a return. Ulnage Roll E 358/9 m 8v.

⁷⁷ WS ii p.1352.

⁷⁸ The biographical note about him in WS ii, p.1352 reads “Also held manor of Freefolk, Hants, purchased from Mark le Fayre (VCH Hants iv, p.282) and lands in Middlesex, London and possibly also in Cambridgeshire and Staffordshire (*Cal. Close Rolls, Hen V, 1413-19*, p.61-2, *Cal. Close Rolls, Hen V, 1422-9* pp.209-11, 378, 384, 386, 389.) Married by 1414 (*Cal. Close Rolls, Hen V, 1413-19*, p.179-80.) Catherine daughter of Mark le Faire. Normally lived in London (Somer Accounts) A royal servant and representative of the king’s chief butler, 1393-4 (*Cal. Pat. Rolls, Ric II, 1391-1396*, pp.216, 476, 667); collector of customs at Soton 1398 and in London 1399-1400 and farmer of ulnage in Hants and Winchester 1404 (when one of his pledges was Mark le Faire) and of subsidy of wool in London 1405 (*Cal. Fine Rolls XI, 1391-1399*, p.230; *XII, 1399-1405* pp.5, 88, 232; *XIII, 1405-1413*, pp.11, 13); chancellor of the Exchequer and warden of the exchange and mint in the Tower of London 1410-11 to c 1439 (*Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen IV, 1408-13*, pp.205, 273, 284, 353; *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen V, 1429-1436*, p.418); MP for Middlesex, 1406-7, JP for Middlesex at various times 1413-44, possibly JP for Cambridgeshire 1430 and 1442-5 (*Cal. Close Rolls, 1405-9*, p.282, 389; *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen V, 1413-1416*, p.421; *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen V, 1416-1422*, p.455; *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen V, 1422-1429*, p.566; *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1429-1436* pp.614, 620; *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1436-1441*, p.586; *Cal. Pat. Rolls, Hen VI, 1441-1446* pp.468, 474). His death may be anticipated 1446 and his executors are mentioned 1454. (*Cal. Close Rolls, Hen VI, 1441-7*, p.364; *Cal. Close Rolls, Hen VI, 1447-54*, p.493).”

they were prominent in business and in the governance of the City. For example, Mark le Faire, who was described variously as a merchant or a vintner, owned substantial property outside the City. Apart from farming the ulnage, he took various offices in the City, rising to serve both as MP and as mayor.⁷⁹ In 1390 he had been constable of the staple.⁸⁰ John Merlawe, Faire's partner as ulnager was Bailiff of Winchester.⁸¹ Merlawe had been deputy ulnager to Henry Somer and John Stere. He and Faire jointly farmed the ulnage between 1408 and 1413, and Merlawe continued to be involved in the ulnage, as the attorney of Thomas Smale and William Wode.⁸² It is noticeable that, whereas some of the earlier ulnagers owned substantial property outside the City, the people holding office in later years became increasingly reliant on the City and its suburbs for their wealth and income.

There is a problem with the identification of both William Gervays and John Arnold, who were joint ulnagers in 1413. In both cases, contemporary records show two men of that name, one of whom seems too old to hold the office and the other too young. The Gervays family held lands in Hattingley and Medstead.⁸³ The younger Gervays was bailiff of the Soke from 1429.⁸⁴ The younger John Arnold was described as a clerk and while the older one had served as the bailiff of the Soke and held property at Barton.⁸⁵ Gervays was the only ulnager after 1403, apart from Mark le Faire, whom the printed records show as owning property outside the area of Winchester in the sixty years to 1463. The ulnagers' interests were all based in Winchester or its suburbs and Soke. This is undoubtedly an indication of the narrowing of focus of Winchester.

A brief review of the ulnagers of Hampshire from 1415 to 1461 will show that they were men of significance in Winchester. For example, Thomas Smale was a butcher, who became the master of butchers in Winchester. He held various civic offices including that of mayor, and served as MP.⁸⁶ In this he was typical of the ulnagers. He was a prominent local business man who also played a leading part in civic affairs. Smale farmed the ulnage jointly with William Wode, who

⁷⁹ WS ii p.1228.

⁸⁰ C 67 m 3

⁸¹ WCM 1159 p.1019.

⁸² Ulnage Roll E 358/9 m 8v.

⁸³ WCM 16637, p.818.

⁸⁴ WS ii p.1242.

⁸⁵ WS ii p.1148-9, 972, et alius.

⁸⁶ WS ii p.1349.

was an attorney. Wode, who was also Recorder of Winchester, served as MP for the City.⁸⁷ His property included large gardens in Colebrook Street.⁸⁸ Wode then farmed the ulnage with John Veel, a merchant based in Winchester, who found time to undertake various civic offices including the mayoralty.⁸⁹

In 1432 Wode and Veel were followed by Walter Hore and John Writher. Walter Hore was a dyer, who held various civic offices as well as that of mayor.⁹⁰ John Writher was probably a merchant because he brought iron, oil and woad from Southampton. He held a variety of civic offices which included serving as mayor and as MP. Amongst his property holdings he rented the inn known as "Le Sterre" in the High Street.⁹¹

In 1442 Writher and Hore were replaced by Hill, Ede and Christmas, of whom the first two were Winchester men. Stephen Ede was a fuller, who brought a wide range of goods from Southampton such as oil, woad, alum white soap and linen cloth. He also took his turn as mayor.⁹² Peter Hill served as ulnager for 20 years from 1442. He was a fuller, although it is obvious that he was also involved with dyeing, as well as undertaking civic office including that of mayor.⁹³ He does not seem to have been as prominent in the government of Winchester as some other ulnagers, but it may be that years of being ulnager on his own absorbed the pool of time he had to give to public office.

The impression received is of a well-to-do trading community, its members successful in their businesses and wealthy enough to hold reasonable amounts of property within the City; but after the early years, not having sufficient money, or sufficient perspective, to invest in land outside the ambit of the City. They devoted surplus energies over and above what they needed for their core businesses, to the administration of the City and their trade guilds. Being in the cloth trade does not appear to have been a requisite of farmers of the Hampshire or Winchester, ulnage. Three of the farmers were in the cloth trade, Hore, Ede and Hill, but others were not primarily

⁸⁷ WS ii p.1388.

⁸⁸ WS ii Item 523 p.839.

⁸⁹ WS ii p.1375.

⁹⁰ WS ii Item 416 p.750.

⁹¹ WS ii p.1392.

⁹² WS ii p.1222.

⁹³ WS ii p.1261.

so engaged. Their position in the civic hierarchy seems to have been more relevant than their trade.

The officials who lived in the County, but outside Winchester, are those from the later part of the 1460s and after. The first of these was John Hamond, who was the lessee of the manor of South Wells to the south of Romsey.⁹⁴ One of his mainpennors was Henry Burgeys, also of South Wells. Although Romsey was the second most important cloth town in the County, and ahead of Southampton in volume of output, it produced no ulnager, for Hamond was not a Romsonian. (Romsey was clearly a manufacturing town rather than a mercantile centre.) Rather, Hamond had strong links with Winchester, and like many others, with property elsewhere was well integrated into the local financial structure: at various times he had been a Justice of the Peace, mayor and MP for Winchester. His partner, Burrell was probably a fuller of Winchester, and had served the City as mayor. He subsequently acted as collector of the ulnage when John Farley was approver in 1469/70.⁹⁵ Another man from outside Winchester was Thomas Newby who had connections in the Alton area. His two mainpennors were John Hulyn of Alton, gentleman, and William Hoggeham of Lasham, gentleman.⁹⁶

One man who was from within the County, but not part of the group that controlled Winchester, was John Walker, a prominent inhabitant of Southampton. His bid was for the farm of Southampton only and was backed by Richard Walker, grocer of London, and by Anthony Spynell of Southampton, merchant, and one of the Italians who were so important to the town.⁹⁷ Walker was mayor of Southampton between 1473 and 1483,⁹⁸ and he was one of the protagonists in the internecine disputes that were such a feature of Southampton in the later fifteenth century.⁹⁹ His bid may have had more to do with local politics than with the ulnage and he never took up the office. The bid can hardly have been motivated by desire for profit

⁹⁴ M. Hicks, "Romsey and Richard III" in *Hampshire Field Club Local History Newsletter* 7 (April 1983) pp.151-3. Hicks explained that Hamond was the brother-in-law of Thomas Greenfield from whom he leased the manor. Hamond was a lawyer and recorder of Winchester from 1467. He was appointed a joint approver of the ulnage with Edward Langford, on 14 Jan 1464.

⁹⁵ WS ii p.1179.

⁹⁶ The absence of published medieval records for Alton is a great handicap in studying Hampshire in the fifteenth century. Newby was appointed farmer on 1 Dec 1470. It seems that he never took up his appointment because no return was rendered by him, and John Farley submitted one for the period when Newby might have acted.

⁹⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls* XXI, 1471-1485, p.266 1484 Mar 7.

⁹⁸ H.W. Gidden ed., *The Remembrance Book of Southampton II 1303-1518* (Southampton, 1928) p.61.

⁹⁹ Alwyn A. Ruddock, *Italian Merchants and Shipping in Southampton 1270-1600* (Southampton, 1951) p.169.

because Southampton was not very important to the ulnage. For example in 1466/7, only 19s 9³/₄d subsidy and ulnage were paid in the town.¹⁰⁰

Thus most of the officials were men of Winchester, although a few others lived elsewhere in the County. Of the non-Hampshire men, all that can be said of John Criston (or Christmas) was that he did not come from Winchester, because the two men he served with, Stephen Ede and Peter Hill, were always described as "of Winchester" whereas he was not. It is possible that he lived in London.¹⁰¹ John Hall was a leading citizen of Salisbury, who features prominently in the annals of that City.¹⁰² Richard More may have lived in Berkshire. The Brokage Records show that he had his servant convey goods for him from Southampton to "Burfield", which is presumably Burghfield in Berkshire.¹⁰³ Unfortunately, there is no trace in the Hampshire records of John Farley,¹⁰⁴ Edward Langford, John Berthom¹⁰⁵ and Vincent Pittlesden.¹⁰⁶ Most of these men took up office in or after 1464. The link with Winchester was broken in that year and not re-established in the years to 1485, with the exception of Robert Burrell and John Hamond, who held office for a year in 1467/8.

When the affiliations of the ulnagers for the whole country were being considered, it was shown that the mainpernors were men likely to be known to the men they were guaranteeing. It seemed likely that, if a man found mainprise from the county for which he sought office, he probably had close ties with that county. This can be demonstrated to be true of Hampshire, where the ulnagers were more closely linked with the County than was generally true. In the same way, it can be shown that there were more mainpernors whose domicile was Hampshire than is true nationally. The figures are shown as per centages in the Table 4-7 below.

¹⁰⁰ E 101/344/17 m 18

¹⁰¹ Their appointment was enrolled in the Fine Rolls on 25 Jan 1442, and Christmas served until his death in 1455-6. He may have had Hampshire connections as Christmas is a surname regularly found in the County. (*Cal. Fine Rolls* XVII, 1437-1445, p.230.)

¹⁰² John Hall was farmer between 1482 and 1485 and his appointment was enrolled in the Fine Rolls on 9 Dec 1483. (*Cal. Fine Rolls* XXI, 1471-1485, p.266.)

¹⁰³ K.E. Stevens and T.E. Olding eds, *Brokage Books of Southampton 1477-8 and 1527-8* (Southampton, 1985) pp.104 and 107. The fact that one of Richard More's mainpernors was also called Richard More, a merchant of Bristol, means that it cannot be assumed that this Richard More also lived in Bristol as there were clearly two men of the same name about at the same time.

¹⁰⁴ Farley may have come from Gloucestershire since that is the County which he first administered jointly with Hampshire. His appointments as approver were enrolled 27 Jan 1468 and 12 July 1471. *Cal. Fine Rolls* XX, 1461-1471, p.201; XXI, 1471-1485, p.16.

¹⁰⁵ Langford and Berthom were jointly appointed to be approvers in 14 Jan 1464. *Cal. Fine Rolls* XX, 1461-1471, p.140.

¹⁰⁶ Pittlesden's appointment was dated 18 Aug 1471 and was recorded in the Fine Rolls as not having been taken up. (*Cal. Fine Rolls* XXI, 1471-1485, p.17.)

Place	Same County	Different County	London	Not Known
National figures %	34	31	29	6
Hampshire figures %	43	29	24	5

Table 4-7 Comparison of Domicile of Mainpernors %

Thus more men came from Hampshire than from any other single place. If the mainprise of the non-Hampshire ulnagers is discounted, then the self-reliance of the County is even more striking. Of the 26 mainpernors who underwrote Hampshire-based ulnagers, 18 of them lived within the County; five came from London and there were three others. Winchester declined in importance during the fifteenth century,¹⁰⁷ but there were still men of sufficient standing within the County who were able and willing to back their associates in the matter of taking up the administration of the ulnage. More of Hampshire's mainpernors were Hampshire men than was true of the national average even when the effect of outside ulnagers is included. The County was therefore able to keep control of the administration of the ulnage to a greater degree than was apparent nationally. Thus not only were most Hampshire ulnagers local men, but their appointments were under-written by Hampshire men, a degree of local involvement well above the national average.

Winchester Corporation

Reference has been made throughout this section to the involvement of the Corporation of the City of Winchester in the administration of the ulnage. There is a surprisingly substantial body of evidence to support this claim. The explanation for the city's continuing interest is that, for the most part, an annual sum of forty marks was allowed them, provided that the money was spent on the upkeep of the City walls. Since forty marks made up the majority of the revenue collected, there was additional reason for the interest of the City fathers.

This interest was clearly demonstrated during the appointment of Peter Hill, and Stephen Ede of Winchester jointly with John Christmas. Their letters patent were granted in 1442.¹⁰⁸ According to the text of those letters the appointment had been made

pursuant to a petition of the king's lieges the mayor, bailiffs and commonalty of the City of Winchester, showing that the subsidy and ulnage of woollen cloths made for sale within the

¹⁰⁷ This will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, particularly the latter.

¹⁰⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI-II, 1437-1445*, p.230 1442 Jan 25.

said City have been committed, for a yearly farm of 49 marks, to certain persons who dwell far from the City, so that thereby many injuries and vexations have unjustly befallen the said lieges, to their no small loss and grievance, and that yet greater losses are like to befall them hereafter unless a speedy remedy be applied by the king.

It was not stated who the certain persons were, and any letters patent issued to them were never enrolled. This incident not only showed the active participation of the City of Winchester in the appointment of ulnagers, but it also gave a glimpse of the negotiations that took place before letters patent were issued. In order to secure their position, the local men agreed to increase the farm of 49 marks by an extra mark. The farm was granted for 50 years, so the Winchester authorities were making a very strong bid to shut out other people. The letters patent omitted the clause allowing for other parties to make a higher bid for the farm, which the incumbents would have had to match if they wished to retain the office.

There were other instances in which the hand of the corporation may reasonably be suspected. For example, they may have put pressure on John Champflour to withdraw from office. On 24 November 1395 John Champflour was appointed ulnager for Winchester and his appointment was duly enrolled amongst the Fine Rolls. He rendered no returns and on 29 January 1396, his statement that he had surrendered his letters patent to John Fromond was duly enrolled in the Ulnage Rolls. The next Ulnage Roll entry for Winchester covered the period from 24 November 1395 until 24 October 1397, and was submitted by John Fromond. According to the introduction to this item, Fromond's letters patent were granted on 29 January 1396 and were enrolled in the Memoranda Rolls.¹⁰⁹ The question arises why did this switch of ulnager take place? Looking at the biographical notes of the two men, both were wealthy and important. However Champflour was primarily a County man,¹¹⁰ while Fromond's power base was within Winchester. The Winchester Corporation may have resented an outsider having such influence within the City and exerted pressure to have him removed. Unfortunately, the official records do not show the terms on which the change was made.

Another example of the involvement of the Corporation can be seen in the appointment of Thomas Smale and William Wode to be farmers in 1415.¹¹¹ In the appointment, Thomas

¹⁰⁹ Letters patent were seen as grants specific to the recipient, and could not be used as negotiable instruments.

¹¹⁰ There is little about Champflour in WS ii, but his name is to be found many times in the WCM. He was Sheriff of Hampshire in 1401-2.

¹¹¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII*, 1413-1422, p.110 1415 Apr 24.

Smale was described as mayor of Winchester,¹¹² while William Wode had been Recorder of the City and an MP.¹¹³ It is possible that they may have taken the office of ulnager as part of their official duties, or as a perquisite of office. Another unusual appointment was made in 1432 when John Writher and Walter Hore, both Winchester men of some importance, were awarded the farm, but no mainpernors were required.

The most desperate bid by the Corporation to retain control arose in 1461, when twelve members of the council jointly took the farm. This concern must be what lies behind the extraordinary (retrospective) appointment of twelve joint ulnagers in 1462. Presumably, the City council could not find a suitable man or men to take the post, so in desperation the council assumed the responsibility. As will be discussed in chapter 6, there was a lack of vitality in the economy of Winchester by the 1460s and this sluggishness had spilt over into public life. Fewer people held office in this period, and they held fewer offices each. The City was being run by a smaller group of people than had been the case formerly.¹¹⁴ The City could not bear to let the collection of ulnage pass out of its hands, since much of the revenue was returned to its coffers, but no one could be found to be responsible for it. The farm was for 50 marks a year and it was made with

proviso that the farmers have allowance in their said farm in respect of the 40 marks a year, from the issues of the ulnage and subsidy of cloths ... granted for a certain term to the mayor, bailiffs and commonalty of Winchester as a corporate body by Henry VI.¹¹⁵

The return for the office of this syndicate was enrolled in 1466, by which time two of the twelve were dead.¹¹⁶

There is nothing in the Fine Rolls to suggest that any other City authority kept such a tight control on the ulnage as was the case with Winchester. That is not to say that various City authorities were not exerting influence on the appointments, but none other ^{was} ~~were~~ so blatant. This may be partly because no other City was granted an income from the revenue and therefore

¹¹² WS ii p.1349

¹¹³ WS ii p.1388

¹¹⁴ Jennifer Kermode has observed that the practice of compounding to avoid civic office was widespread in Winchester by 1420. She also observed that in York there was a narrowing of the number of people who held civic office during the fifteenth century. She attributed this to the wealthy men of the town deliberately excluding lesser folk and administering the City for their own benefit. See Jennifer I. Kermode "Urban Decline? The Flight From Office In Late Medieval York" *Econ. H.R.* 2nd Ser. XXXV (1982) pp.179-198.

¹¹⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XX, 1461-1471*, p.74 1462 May 20. The Corporation went to the trouble of protecting their grant by paying 4 marks into the hanaper for an inspeximus and confirmation, enrolled in the Patent Rolls 16 Feb 1461.

they did not have the same incentive to keep a tight control. It is in this respect that Hampshire ceases to be typical of other places in the administration of the ulnage.

Occupations

Information about commercial activity can be found for 28 of the 43 Hampshire and Winchester ulnagers, but some fall into more than one category. This is not so very surprising, as many people have more than one way of earning their living during their adult lives. At least five men were merchants, one was a grocer and another a chandler. There were two butchers, two vintners and three innkeepers. There was one attorney. There were six men who were dealing in cloth, and six who were trading in woad. Three men were fullers and one was a dyer. It is noticeable how few working cloth producers became ulnagers. To re-iterate, there were three fullers and a dyer out of the 28, and no weavers at all. By the fifteenth century, weaving was generally a low status occupation in Winchester and few weavers were wealthy. The men who were substantial enough to become ulnagers were mainly merchants, not manufacturers. Some of the merchants in this list were dealing with substantial quantities of wine or of woad, both expensive commodities.

Despite the figures given above, the Hampshire list reflects a greater association with the cloth trade than is found nationally. This probably results from the absence of outsiders using the administration of the tax as an investment opportunity. The City of Winchester authorities kept sufficient control over the administration to prevent this happening in Hampshire. Since the City was in decline during the fifteenth century, this was a remarkable achievement. There was a general absence of courtiers in the middle period when Henry VI's household servants were found farming the ulnage, although there had been two men of court at the beginning of the century. There was also an absence of farmers who were described by their social status rather than by their occupation. The men who were described as "esquire" or "gentleman" were not a feature of this list. Apart from one or two early Hampshire ulnagers, the ulnagers almost all came from within the trading community, mostly of Winchester, and from men who were active in civic affairs within that City.

Length of Tenure

The average length of tenure of ulnage officials in Winchester and Hampshire officials was 3.2 years, or half a year shorter than the national average of 3.7 years.. There was an unsettled

¹¹⁶ The return is enrolled in E 358/9 m 26v.

period before 1401 which substantially brought down the average, especially as there were two series of appointments, City and County, several of which lasted only a short time. From examination of the Fine Rolls, two appointments made before 1404 appear to exceed the average. One of these is the appointment of William Sturmy for the County made in 1395.¹¹⁷ When the returns are examined, however, it can be seen that another ulnager, Henry Joce, officiated for a year, and Sturmy's period in office did not exceed the average. The ulnager who exceeded the average was John Balon. He held office on several occasions,¹¹⁸ although not all of them were supported by enrolled letters patent, and jointly they came to more than five years in office.

In the years between 1404 and 1431, there was a series of medium term periods of office. Henry Somer and John Stere served for five years from 1404,¹¹⁹ and they were followed by Mark le Faire and John Merlawe who served for four and a half years, until the death of Henry IV.¹²⁰ The next medium-term appointment was of Thomas Smale and William Wode served for seven and a half years from 1415.¹²¹ They were replaced by John Veel and William Wode whose partnership lasted for eight years and was ended by Wode's death.¹²² After a short spell by Veel on his own, Walter Hore and John Writher held the farm for close on ten years until 1442.¹²³

Writher and Hore were followed by Peter Hill who remained in office for nearly twenty years, aided, until their respective deaths by John Christmas and Stephen Ede.¹²⁴ After that, there followed a string of appointments, first of farmers and then of approvers, none of which were held for long, until Richard More became first the approver and later the farmer, serving in all for eight years from 1474.¹²⁵ Had it not been for the length of time which Hill held office, the

¹¹⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI, 1391-1399*, p.165 1395 Nov 22.

¹¹⁸ The Ulnage Rolls show him submitting returns for 7 May 1397 to 7 Apr 1398 (E 358/8 m 5r), 7 Apr 1398 to 1 May 1398 (E 358/8 m 8r); 17 Oct 1399 to 26 Jan 1401 (E 358/8 m, 11r); 26 Jan 1401 to 14 Nov 1401 (E 358/8 m 12r); 14 Nov 1401 to 12 Nov 1402 (E 358/9 m 2r); 14 Nov 1402 to 12 Nov 1403 (E 358/9 m 3r); and 12 Nov 1403 to 26 Jan 1404 (E 58/9 m 4r). His appointments before October 1399 were not enrolled in the Fine Rolls.

¹¹⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII, 1399-1405*, p.232 1404 Jan 31.

¹²⁰ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIII, 1405-1413*, p.138 1409 Jan 16.

¹²¹ *Cal. Fine Rolls XIV, 1413-1422*, p.110 1415 Apr 24.

¹²² *Cal. Fine Rolls XV, 1422-1430*, p.16 1422 Dec 8.

¹²³ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI-T, 1430-1437*, p.73 1432 Jun 22.

¹²⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI-TI, 1437-1445*, p.230 1442 Jan 25.

¹²⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XXI, 1471-1485*, p.91 1474 Nov 8, and p.155 1478 June 5. He was also appointed farmer on 10 Feb 1485. (p.293)

average spell of office holding in Hampshire would have been substantially below the national average, mostly because of the unsettled period before 1401.

Duties of Ulnagers

There is no definite information about the day-to-day administration of the ulnage, but the requirements of the work would impose certain constraints. The ulnagers needed to arrange for the cloths to be inspected and measured. They had to arrange for their deputies to have access to the seals as required, but for the seals to be kept safely when not in use. They also had to ensure that their deputies had a suitable supply of wax or lead discs for imprinting. Their deputies would have needed to be paid. The money paid by the tax payers had to be received, and safeguarded until disposed of. For their own purposes, they probably needed proper records to be kept, especially when they worked through deputies. It was necessary to arrange for returns to be made to the Exchequer in a suitable format, and for the revenue or farm rent to be paid or accounted for. In order to protect their own income, if they were farmers, as well as to comply with the law, they may have arranged for inspections of places where broadcloths might be found, to deter evasion of the tax.

The returns provide a glimpse of the personality of the ulnagers. John Balon appears to have been very precise. For example, his particular account for the year 1403/4, showed the details of the cloths which had been taxed. They were described as cloths of assise, straits and kerseys, as appropriate.¹²⁶ By comparison, Robert Archer, the City ulnager for the year 1402/3, submitted his return showing only the units of cloth of assise, without showing what cloths were actually presented to him.¹²⁷ Yet it is obvious that smaller cloths were being presented to him from the number of half cloths recorded in the Particular account.

There is some evidence that the king's ulnagers were not the only people who searched cloth. Mary Hulton has drawn attention to the fact that, in Coventry at the beginning of the sixteenth century, only sealed cloth might be offered for sale.¹²⁸ However, it is not clear whether this regulation included ulnaged cloths, where appropriate, or whether it only applied to cloths inspected and sealed by Coventry's own cloth searchers. In Coventry, searchers were paid a penny for each cloth searched, compared with the ulnager's half penny. Hulton does not say

¹²⁶ E 101/344/9

¹²⁷ E 101/344/17

¹²⁸ Mary Hulton, *True as Coventry Blue* (Coventry, 1995) p.32.

whether the local searchers also acted as deputies for the farmers of the ulnage, or whether they were a second set of inspectors.

It is not apparent whether the owners of cloth to be ulnaged came to the ulnagers or whether the ulnagers went to them. The absence of references to "ulnagers' halls" and the like in civic records indicates that the ulnagers went to the tax payers rather than vice versa. Since other inspectors had a requirement to inspect cloths at manufacturers' premises, the requirement to have the ulnager visit as well would not be considered unusual.¹²⁹ On a more positive note, Bridbury found a regulation in Salisbury dating from 1418 that required the deputy ulnagers to visit houses every Monday in order to seal cloth.¹³⁰ Chope formed the opinion that in Devon in the year 1395/6, the ulnager "confined his attention to the chief fairs".¹³¹ His explanation for this was that the ulnager

was required to make proclamation, prohibiting all purchase and sale of cloth that had not paid the subsidy ... It may be assumed that he required the cloths to be brought to the fairs to be measured and sealed. -

In the following year, the Devon ulnager changed his tactics, visiting villages and outlying districts as well as attending at fairs. This resulted in far more names of people who paid the ulnage but no increase in revenue. Thus it seems that ulnagers visited the tax payers, rather than having cloth brought to them.

Wherever the work was done, the men measuring the cloth had to be equipped with suitable measuring equipment. The measuring standard seems to have been a line. The statute of Northampton, for example, required that every cloth of ray should be measured "by a line of seven yards, four times measured by the list".¹³² By 1440, some sharp practice had become

¹²⁹ See Heather Swanson, *Medieval Artisans* (Oxford, 1989) p.116. Swanson observed of the late-fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that the searchers "had extensive powers to enter private premises to examine goods whenever they chose to do so. ... Mercantile authority was likewise asserted over the Coventry weavers and fullers' craft in an ordinance of 1518 which made provision for two weavers and two fullers to search the work of the craft".

See also Herbert Heaton, *The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries* (Oxford, 1920) p.41. Heaton found that in nearly every York guild, a weekly inspection or "search" was made of every weaver's workroom or shop to inspect the work in hand.

Another example is to be found in Mary Hulton, *Urban Weavers Of Medieval England*, unpublished PhD thesis (Birmingham, 1990) para.3.26 quoting C.A. Markham, ed., *Northampton Borough Records 1*, (Northampton, 1898) p.331 f.83b. Hulton wrote that in 1511, in Northampton, a local ordinance was made which stated that all searchers "shall see every cloth drawn over the beam (i.e. removed from the loom in such a way that it could be examined) ere it pass the weaver's house".

¹³⁰ A.R. Bridbury, *Medieval English Clothmaking* (London, 1982) p.75.

¹³¹ R. Pearce Chope "The Aulnager in Devon" in *Transactions of the Devon Association* 44 (Devon, 1912) p.578.

¹³² *Stat. Realm* 1, p.260, 2 Edw III Stat. Northampton c.14.

common, especially in London. Complaint was not made against the ulnagers, but they were seen as providing the remedy. Each ulnager, at his own expense, was to buy

a line made of silk or of thread, ... scaled at both ends, after the advice of the Barons of the Exchequer; ... [the line to be] in length twelve yards and twelve inches, and the said line signed at every yard an inch, and at the end of the half-yard half an inch, the quarter of a yard a quarter of an inch, to measure a whole cloth or a dozen broad or straight, measuring for the dozen of cloth watered twelve yards and twelve inches, and of dry cloth unwatered fourteen yards and fourteen inches; so measuring the length till the end of the cloth.¹³³

Unfortunately, the price of these measuring lines is not given, nor is it possible to say how many were needed in Hampshire.

The records give no indication about the steps the ulnagers took to manage the money they collected. They would have needed to keep it safely and in due course arrange for payments to be sent to London. They would presumably have required records to be compiled, not only as good business practice but also to enable them to check on their deputies. They were also required to submit returns to the Exchequer and it would be necessary to arrange fair copies of these to be prepared and sent to London.¹³⁴

It seems unlikely that the ulnagers themselves carried out the day-to-day work of measuring cloths and collecting the fees. They seem to have been members of the social strata at which they would have employed men to assist them in their work while they managed it. Indeed, this was envisaged in the letters patent in which the appointments of ulnagers or farmers were recorded. As early as 1399, John Cok the ulnager for Norfolk and Suffolk was to carry out his duties "in person or by deputy",¹³⁵ and this condition was continued throughout subsequent appointments. These deputies are rarely seen in the records. Occasionally, one was named in connection with the seizing of cloth but that is all. Therefore it is not possible to say whether the ulnagers used their own staff to carry out the work, or hired suitable subcontractors. If the ulnagers were local men, one would expect a mixture, with their own men doing the work in the town where they lived and subcontractors being appointed elsewhere in the County

¹³³ *Stat. Realm* 2, p.312, 18 Hen VI cap.16. London merchants, when buying cloth, were measuring by the yard, but placing a hand between the yardstick, rather than the traditional thumb. Thus a twenty-six yard cloth was claimed to be only twenty-four yards long and the price adjusted accordingly.

¹³⁴ Many of these returns for Hampshire still exist, and some of the earlier ones are still stored in the leather pouches in which they were submitted. For example E 101/344/10; and E 101/344/13.

¹³⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls XII. 1399-1405*, pp. 36-8 1399 Oct 17.

Administration would have been much easier if the main cloth producing towns had their own officer, and the form of the particular returns suggest that this was the case. They contain lists of tax payers divided up by town according to where money was collected.¹³⁶ It seems likely that these were centres where there was a deputy at which revenue was collected, rather than the places where the tax payers necessarily lived.

Two ulnagers' assistants mentioned in the Hampshire records were described as servants and another two were described as attorneys. In 1454 Nicholas Brightwyn¹³⁷, servant of the farmers at Romsey, found unsealed cloth in the possession of William Heckley of Southampton, a carter.¹³⁸ Brightwyn was described elsewhere as a fuller¹³⁹ and he was substantial enough to trade in his own right, having goods sent from Southampton to Romsey and Salisbury.¹⁴⁰ Another deputy named in the records was David Balchild of Alton who held lands in the Ropley area.¹⁴¹

Of the two attorneys, the first to be mentioned was John Merlawe who described himself as the deputy of Henry Somer and John Stere. He had seized cloth in 1404/5 and the enrolled item in the Ulnage Rolls give his account of the event.¹⁴² Subsequently, Merlawe became a farmer of the ulnage in his own right. The other attorney who was mentioned in the ulnage returns was Philip at Well of New Alresford, who was the attorney of John Writher and Walter Hore. They had left two seals with him for safekeeping. Unfortunately, his house was burnt down and the seals were "by fortune of fire burnt and molten" in the year 1442/3.¹⁴³

Although three deputies and one servant have been identified, it is unlikely that they were true servants of the farmers. In modern terms they were probably subcontractors, independent men who had undertaken work on behalf of a principal, and it is likely that these deputies were dealing with the ulnage in their own towns. In most parts of the County, certainly outside Winchester, ulnaging cloth would have been at best a part-time job, and in some areas only an

¹³⁶ For example, E101/344/11

¹³⁷ Nicholas Brightwyn is mentioned in the Southampton Brokage Book for 1448 carrying teasels and low grade wool to Salisbury.

¹³⁸ E 358/9 m 30r.

¹³⁹ WCM 16329, p.776

¹⁴⁰ E.A. Lewis ed., *The Southampton Port and Brokage Books 1448-9* (Southampton, 1993) passim.

¹⁴¹ WCM 16776, p.831.

¹⁴² E 358/9 m 5r.

¹⁴³ E 101/344/17. This account is the only document written wholly in English, although the Latin version has survived in the same bundle of documents.

occasional chore. For example, in Alton between 20 July 1394 and 22 November 1395, 81½ cloths were recorded as paying tax. Thus cloths were being presented at the rate of less than two a week. In Havant the total for the same period was 43½ cloths.¹⁴⁴ Unless the ulnager was itinerant, it would not have been cost effective to employ men full time. Thus it is much more likely that local deputies were appointed to attend to local needs and either paid a fee, or were appointed on terms akin to farming. The skill of the ulnager would lie in appointing sufficient deputies for people to be able to present their cloths locally rather than taking them elsewhere, without dissipating all the profits of office on staff costs.

Seals

One of the duties of the ulnager, or farmer, was to safeguard the seals and make them available when required. The number of seals in existence, and the fact that they were kept by people other than the ulnagers, gives credence to the idea that the work of ulnager was carried out by men other than those named in the letters patent. The number of seals¹⁴⁵ that were issued in each County points to the fact that it was recognised that several people would be sealing cloth and each would need matrices with which to make the impressions. Unfortunately, the returns only give the number of seals issued for ulnage and subsidy; they do not provide any detail. At various times the ulnagers were to attach seals to cloths which showed their actual lengths. Since the seals that were accounted for to the Exchequer at the end of each year were described by reference to their being for subsidy or for ulnage, it seems likely that seals showing length of cloth were additional. The law required new seals to be issued in 1410 and 1465,¹⁴⁶ though it is not possible to be certain that this requirement was met.

In 1465, the ulnager was enjoined to use lead seals and to put them at the end of the cloth. New seals, or matrices, "to be devised by the treasurer" were to be brought into use showing whether the cloth was perfect or not, and what size it was. The use of lead seals was a long-standing practice in the administration of the ulnage. It was the duty of the Exchequer to provide the matrices for the use of the ulnagers or farmers. Different counties had matrices made of different metals - bronze, iron or steel, which suggests that they may originally have been paid for locally.

¹⁴⁴ E 101/344/11

¹⁴⁵ Egan referred to the implement with which the impression was made as a matrix, and the lead or wax which was impressed as the seal. This has the merit of being unambiguous. The Latin texts use the word "sigilla" for the matrix. See Geoff Egan, *Lead Cloth Seals and Related Items in the British Museum* (London, 1994)

¹⁴⁶ See *Stat. Realm* 2, 11 Hen VI cap.6, pp.163-165, and 4 Edw IV cap.1.

The number of seals which were issued for Hampshire was surprisingly large, the numbers having been determined on a basis, for which the logic is no longer apparent. For example Richard More's enrolled return for the two years from September 1476 to September 1478 lists 135 seals for which he was responsible. They are listed in Appendix 11.¹⁴⁶ 28 of these 135 were attributed to Hampshire, more than the number found in any other county.¹⁴⁷ The relative numbers do not seem to bear much relationship to the relative importance of the counties, nor even to their size. Both Bristol and Wiltshire had larger farms than did Hampshire, and Devon and Cornwall cover a greater area than either Hampshire or Herefordshire.

The basis of the number of seals was not solely historic. In Hampshire there were occasional changes in the numbers of seals although large number of seals continued to be issued. These changes and re-issues imply active control by the Exchequer. The first mention of seals in the Hampshire returns was made in 1398, when John Balon of Hawkley, who had been ulnager for three weeks, accounted for 28 seals, "both large and small, new and old", which he had received from William Sturmy of Alton, his predecessor. Balon's successor, Henry Joce of Andover, described the seals in the same words as did Balon but with the additional comment that they were made of copper.

These 28 seals were for the County alone. At the same time as the Hampshire ulnagers had 28 seals, the Winchester ulnagers had 16. The Winchester ulnagers had jurisdiction over Winchester, its suburbs and the Soke, so were responsible for an area of central Hampshire.¹⁴⁸ In the return of John Archer for the period from 21 November 1399 to 12 December 1400, they are described as being "of copper".¹⁴⁹ The last Winchester return to survive was for the year to 29 September 1404, when the City ulnagers were still accounting for 16 seals. The ulnager Robert Archer passed them to the incoming farmers for the whole County, who were Henry Somer and John Stere.¹⁵⁰ As has already been stated, there then followed a period when

¹⁴⁶ E 358/9 m 50r

¹⁴⁷ *Stat. Realm* 2, 11 Hen IV c.6.

¹⁴⁸ For example, see E 358/8 m 7v

¹⁴⁹ Geoff Egan, *Lead Cloth Seals and related items in the British Museum* (London, 1994). The item described on p.35, and fig. 16 no. 45 showed a Winchester seal as a "copper-alloy matrix, diameter .26 mm, hollow at the back and expanding with a curve to the die face; there are two holes for attachment pins ... an engraved V on the side indicates the position of the top of the device. leopard's head over fleur-de-lis, both in two-arched tressure, S'VLNAGII PANNOR' IN COM' WYNTO' around (Lombardic lettering)". Egan did not know when this seal was in use.

¹⁵⁰ E 358/9 m 5r

annual returns were not required, so it is not possible to gain an idea of what was done with the seals, or when.

It was ordered that the Exchequer was to issue new seals in 1410. Because few returns were submitted for Hampshire between 1404 and 1424, it is not possible to determine whether new seals were adopted in the County. It is likely that the older seals were sent back to the Exchequer and new ones issued. Any other practice would leave open the opportunity for fraudulent use of the redundant seals. There were no returns after 1405/6 until 1415 when the two ulnagers accounted for 27 seals of copper, namely 13 for the subsidy and 14 for the ulnage. Seals were next mentioned in the return for the year to 29 September 1426, when the ulnagers accounted for 23 seals, namely 12 for the ulnage and 11 for the subsidy.¹⁵¹ (The return for the two years 1422-24 did not refer to seals.) This was a considerable reduction from the number that had been in use at the beginning of the century. The reason for this change in number was not apparent. That this return was accurate may be inferred from the fact that the return for the following year accounts for the same number of seals.

The number of seals remained around the 28 mark from the latter half of the 1420s, although the balance between subsidy and ulnage changed occasionally. They had risen to 30 but two seals were lost in a fire in New Alresford between 29 September 1442 and 24 June 1443, so that number held dropped to 28, 15 for the subsidy and 13 for the ulnage. The total number of seals then remained the same throughout the rest of the period.

Fraud by Taxpayers

Before those who paid the tax are considered, there will be a brief discussion on those who were caught evading payment. Were they fundamentally the same people, or were they a sub-class of some sort?¹⁵²

A surprisingly small amount of cloth was seized in the 91 years as can be seen in the summary in Appendix 13. This list shows not only whose cloth was seized and its value as assessed by

¹⁵¹ E 358/9 m 11v

¹⁵² It must be pointed out that evading the ulnage seems very futile. The rate of tax was very low compared with the cost of cloth, and cloths were liable to all sorts of quality control, so the question of disposal of cloths lacking ulnage seals must have loomed large. There is much more incentive to evade modern excise duties which are set at such high rates that they are more, or much more, than the intrinsic value of the goods being taxed.

external valuers. Where these values are shown clearly they vary between 10d and 1s 8d a yard. The values given for the seized cloths appear to be consistent with other contemporary prices in so far as it is possible to judge. To put these prices in perspective it is worth noting that the sumptuary laws of 1363 required farm labourers and others having less than 40s in goods to wear blanket and russet costing not more than 12d the ell.¹⁵⁴ They can also be compared with prices cited by Christopher Dyer.¹⁵⁵ He wrote that

The everyday clothes of the lord and his family were sometimes made from material in the same price range as that supplied to the servants, from 1s. to 3s. per yard, but they also provided themselves with much more expensive textiles. The best woollen cloth could cost 5s. per yard, as bought by the Bishop of Ely in 1380, and the Stonor family in 1479-82 were wearing clothes made from tawney and russet cloth which cost 6s per yard.

This would put the pieces of cloth seized in Hampshire into the 'everyday' range, rather than the luxury class.

Dyer then gave an example of purchases by a gentry family, the Eyres of Hassop in Derbyshire in the 1470s

who obtained most of their woollens by contract with local weavers, fullers and dyers, as much as 100 yards in one year. They also bought ready-made a wide range of cheap woollens, cottons, canvas and linens fustians, kendalls, russets, buckrams and hollands) often 2 or 3 yards at a time, at prices that varied between 2½d and 1s 2d a yard.

Most of these latter types of cloth were exempt from the ulnage. Although the ulnage only applied to high quality woollen cloth, these prices help to put the value of cloths seized into context.

Because the names of many of the people from whom cloth was seized are known, it is possible to examine what manner of men they were. Probably the most unexpected person on the list is Mark le Faire, wealthy merchant, mayor of Winchester, MP, and ultimately farmer of the ulnage. He was also a substantial dealer in legitimate cloths and he was wealthy enough to export cloth through Southampton. He presented cloths for payment in each of the Winchester returns between 1394 and 1403. He was one of the largest payers of ulnage in Winchester in the period in question. He was one of the two mainpennors for Henry Somer and John Stere when they

¹⁵⁴ L.F. Salzmann, *English Industries of the Middle Ages* (London, 1913) p.169, quoting *Rot Parl* ii p.278. He also drew attention to the fact that Irish friezes were exempted from the ulnage in 1376.

¹⁵⁵ Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1990) p.78-9.

were granted the farm of the ulnage for Hampshire, including Winchester, in 1404. He himself was farmer of the ulnage from 1408 to 1413. Unfortunately no returns survive from that period. Commensurate with his status as a major merchant, he had more cloths seized than did anyone else.¹⁵⁵

Although it has not been possible to trace all the transgressors, the striking thing about those who have left other records is their social standing. These men were not representatives of a criminal underclass living on the margins of society. They were prominent men in their communities and apparently well able to afford the 4½d charges that were required on a whole cloth of assise. For example, Henry Hosier, who had cloth seized on two occasions, also dealt in legitimate cloth. He presented amounts varying from 2½ cloths to 5 cloths, and in 1398-9 presented, additionally, 5 dozens and 6 yards. Unfortunately, his name is not to be found elsewhere in contemporary records so it is not possible to present a description of him. John Denyton, who had two pieces of Welsh cloth seized, was, on occasion, a trading associate of Mark le Faire. He was primarily a vintner and a merchant, although he presented three cloths for payment in 1394-5. The Southampton records show him dealing in cloth through the port in the early fifteenth century. He was not as wealthy as le Faire, and although he served as Bailiff of Winchester, he never became mayor or MP. In 1404 he granted his tenement in Wongar Street as security for a loan of £45 from Richard Spencer of Salisbury,¹⁵⁶ so he was not free of financial problems.

Most of the men who had cloth seized, can be found in other contemporary records. For example, Richard Wyghteryng was a tailor with a shop in High Street for which he paid an annual rent of £1 13s 4d.¹⁵⁷ John Edward was a fishmonger who served as bailiff of Winchester. He was arraigned for ale offences on occasion. His main premises seem to have been a tenement with a cellar, stall and gutter in High Street. He also rented an adjacent cottage and shop and other premises in Winchester. Since he acted as witnesses for land transfers in both Otterbourne and Stockbridge, it is likely that he had interests in those places.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Biographical notes about le Faire can be found in WS ii p.1228.

¹⁵⁶ WS ii p.1213. Denyton was also called Scherer.

¹⁵⁷ WS ii p.1386. He was also called Whytringe.

¹⁵⁸ WS ii p. 1223 and WCM 14669, p.578, and 18078, p.909.

Simon Long was a wealthy merchant who lived in Church Street, Romsey, although in 1445 he acquired a garden and curtilage outside the Southampton Bargate. He seems to have appealed successfully against the seizure of his cloth, as the money from it was not remitted to the Exchequer. He was probably one of the wealthiest men of Romsey in his day. The Brokage Book of 1439 shows the substantial quantities of dyestuff and fish that he had delivered to Romsey. In 1447 he was reeve of the town, the highest office available in that monastic-dominated settlement, and as such his name survives on many documents as witness to transfers of property.¹⁵⁹ Another person from outside Winchester was William Heckley who had the major carting business in Southampton, if the volume of traffic he generated at the Bargate is any guide. He apprenticed his son to a mercer. He carried out local carting in and around Southampton, transporting amongst other goods^S piles to rebuild the town walls. He also undertook long distance work to Coventry, London, Cirencester and elsewhere.¹⁶⁰ In 1453 and 1454, he served as Steward of Southampton,¹⁶¹ and 1453 was the year when the ulnagers seized 1 wide white cloth, 24 yards long, from him.

One noticeable feature about many of these seizures is that they included very few whole cloths. The amounts seized were mostly measured in yards (or ells).¹⁶² It is possible that the whole cloths represent fraudulent intent to evade the revenue at the time of acquisition, or soon after. The lesser lengths of cloth may have a different provenance. They may have been remnants which were not originally intended for the market, and only sold when surplus to requirements. For example, they may have been made on commission for their owners, and as such would not have been liable to ulnage duty. Garments or other items may have been made from these commissioned cloths, which were expensive, and the owners decided to sell off the unused surplus, either accidentally or intentionally failing to present them to the ulnagers. Once cloth had been cut, it would be difficult to know whether it had paid ulnage, and local knowledge of the trade by the ulnagers or their deputies would be needed to detect evasion. That part-cloths were marketable is confirmed by Bridbury who has discussed the "market for pieces of cloth" and pointed out their existence and usefulness.¹⁶³ The Particular accounts show ulnage being

¹⁵⁹ WCM *passim*

¹⁶⁰ He must have owned at least three carts, and it would be possible to get an idea of the length of journeys by analysing his movements.

¹⁶¹ Barbara Bunyard, *The Brokage Book of Southampton 1439-40* (Southampton, 1941) p.xxii-xxiii and many entries.

¹⁶² This raises questions about how the owners of cloth put themselves in a position where the cloth was liable to seizure, or, more crudely, how they were caught.

¹⁶³ A.R. Bridbury, *Medieval English Clothmaking* (London, 1982) p.53.

on a number of short lengths of cloth. Another possible explanation of these cloths might be that they were taken in settlement of debt, but they would be liable to ulnage if they were to be sold.

There were legal procedures to guide the ulnager in what should be done when unsealed cloths were found that were liable to forfeit. The ulnagers had to establish the offence, seize the cloth, and then arrange for formal proceedings for its valuation, after which they had to arrange its sale. In the early years, the accounts simply stated the amount of money derived from the sale of forfeited cloths, with relatively little detail. In both the County and in Winchester the forfeiture and sale were under the supervision of the sheriff. By 1402, the ulnagers were keeping half the value of any cloth they seized.¹⁶⁵ The cloth had to be assessed by knowledgeable people, the appraisers, in the presence of others who could be relied on to see that the procedures were honestly adhered to. (These others were usually civic officials in a City, or representatives of the sheriff in the County.) Then the cloth was sold, and half the money kept by the ulnager and half remitted to the Exchequer for the use of the king.¹⁶⁶

The accounts of seizure vary, perhaps according to the priorities of the ulnager. Thus the return of 1415-17 is somewhat more informative¹⁶⁷ than earlier ones about the seizure process. The report includes an explanation that the three shillings sent to the king was half the value of 5 yards of woollen cloth found in the shop of Richard Wyghteryng in Winchester. Some of the earlier returns had been more descriptive of the cloths. For example, as is shown in Appendix 13, the Hampshire return for 1394-5, listed the types of cloth seized, together with their values, but their erstwhile owners were not named.

In 1437/8, an elaborate procedure was followed and described. Such formal proceedings may have been the custom before this date, but this was the first time it was explicitly described. It was recorded that 12 ells of white kersey had been seized from William Lyfe. It was valued by Henry Cornish and John Malpas, clothiers of Winchester, in the presence of William Mathewe

¹⁶⁵ Seizure rewards were only abolished by Customs within the last thirty years, but they were at a much lower level than half the value of the goods.

¹⁶⁶ One value of the details of seized cloth is that they can be studied to see what types of cloth were available and at what prices. There were not sufficient cloths seized in Hampshire for this to be meaningful, but a study of all the Ulnage Rolls might reveal changes or trends in cloth and in prices.

¹⁶⁷ E 358/8 m 8v

and Thomas Bonett, bailiffs of Winchester.¹⁶⁷ The return relating to the forfeiture in 1442-44 stated that the cloth was valued and sold¹⁶⁸ in the presence of the mayor and former mayor of Winchester. The forfeited cloths were sold to Walter Hore, Henry Cornish, Richard Bowlond and John Cok. The implication is that they acted as a consortium to buy the cloth in question, and were responsible for its valuation. This may have been the case with the previously mentioned seizure when Cornish and Malpas were involved. The next recorded seizure took place in 1447-8, when Cornish and Bowlond were the valuers, and possibly the purchasers.¹⁶⁹ Finally, in the returns for 1463, the 12 joint farmers, stated whose cloth was seized and gave its value, but did not describe the valuation process.¹⁷⁰

Between 1426 and 1461, fifteen men were named as appraisers.¹⁷¹ Henry Cornish acted on five occasions, John Cok and Richard Bowlond on two and the rest one each. Most of these men probably lived in Winchester and biographical details are available for nine of them. They were all merchants and six of them appear in the Brokage books of Southampton in connection with the transportation of dyestuffs, amongst other things. One of these six, John Partrych was described as a fuller, but clearly was trading as a merchant.¹⁷² Richard Bowlond, Walter Hore and William Colvile each served as mayor and John Colyns held other civic offices in Winchester. Walter Hore was farmer of the ulnage between 1432 and 1442, and acted as appraiser within months of relinquishing that office. William Colvile and John Cotelier junior were two of the 12 men of Winchester who jointly farmed the ulnage between 1461 and 1463. According to the Winchester City records, Cotelier was ulnager there in the 1470s, but he would have been answerable either to John Farley or Richard More who were the approvers.¹⁷³ Thus the men asked to value seized cloth were substantial merchants within the community who could be expected to understand the niceties of the cloth they were examining and able to put a realistic value on it: some of them were themselves involved in administering the ulnage at some time in their lives.

¹⁶⁷ E 358/9 m 17v

¹⁶⁸ E 358/9 m 20v

¹⁶⁹ E 358/9 m 24r

¹⁷⁰ E 358/9 m 51r

¹⁷¹ Henry Cornysch, John Boket (IOW), John Cok, John Colyn of Winchester, John Cotelier jr, John Malpas, John Marion, John Partrych, John Piper (Isle of Wight), John Talley, John Wynman, Richard Bowlond, Walter, Hore, William Colvile, William Hunte.

¹⁷² WS ii p.1316

¹⁷³ WS ii pp.1203-4

The amount of fraud detected was not great for a time span of more than 90 years. It is likely that total evasion of the ulnage was not particularly widespread, especially in a County like Hampshire, where local men were the ulnagers and, therefore, were likely to know what cloths were coming onto the market. It is likely that the tiresome fraud of sealing cloths that were not of sufficient quality was more often practised than was total evasion. The amount of duty involved was so small, relative to the total value of the cloth, that it is surprising that anyone bothered to evade it. The safeguards for the valuation and sale of seized cloth show that there was a respect for the rule of law and that the ulnagers did not have a free hand to confiscate cloth alleged to be unsealed.

One of the criticisms which Carus-Wilson made of More was that he seized no cloths between 1474 and 1478.¹⁷⁴ In view of the large number of counties for which he was responsible, this is surprising. However, when the Hampshire figures are examined and the small numbers of seizures appreciated, then More's failure to make any in those four years is less heinous than at first appears.

¹⁷⁴ E.M. Carus-Wilson, "The Aulnage Accounts: A Criticism", reprinted in E. Carus-Wilson, *Medieval Merchant Venturers*, (London, 1967), p.281 n 1.

Chapter 5 The Hampshire Taxpayers - The Early Records

Introduction

The surviving records of the Hampshire ulnage, from the years 1394 to 1485, together with a few earlier ones, are all to be found in the Public Record Office. They were described generally in chapter 1. This chapter and chapter 6 will be devoted to a study of what they tell us about the people who paid the subsidy and ulnage on woollen cloth. There are records for most years between 1394 and 1485, within which there are two main clusters of more informative Particular records. These records date from the times when the ulnagers were required to submit lists of taxpayers to the Exchequer, unlike the years when the ulnage was farmed and no details were required centrally. The two periods when detailed returns, with names of taxpayers, were required are the years between 1394 and 1403 and those between 1466 and 1478. The few records which have survived for years before 1394 are outside the scope of this work and will therefore not be discussed. It is the later group of records, those arising from 1466-78, whose validity has been challenged by Carus-Wilson. The two groups of lists are so far apart, and because of the doubts about the later lists, the records will be considered in two parts. In this chapter the evidence of the early lists will be analysed and the later lists will be examined in chapter 6.

The doubts cast on the later lists caused all the lists of ulnage payers to be regarded as suspect, and they have been little used as a basis for seeing who was involved in the payment of the subsidy and ulnage. If it can be demonstrated that the lists contain details which bear the hallmark of authenticity and that the names on the earlier particular accounts relate to contemporaneous people, then the lists gain more credibility, and it is justifiable to study them to see who was paying the charges. In this chapter, it will be shown that the particular returns contain details which have an authentic ring to them and that a substantial number of the names on the earlier ulnage lists are found elsewhere in contemporary Hampshire records and therefore there is no reason to think that they are works of fiction. The names will be taken as a record of those who paid the ulnage, and they will be used to form the basis of a study of the ulnage taxpayers. Before the lists are analysed, they will be described in detail.

Sources and Methodology

For the early period, there are six surviving lists for the County outside Winchester, four being different, and four lists of Winchester ulnage payers. The dates of each list have been ascertained and each list has been transcribed. The lists have then been sorted and examined to see how many people were named as taxpayers, and how many different people this represents.¹ A search was made of contemporaneous material in print for names which match those on the list of taxpayers, with a date and place which means that the reference could be to the same person² as is found on the ulnage return. Unpublished local material was not examined. Because there are better records for Winchester than for the rest of the County, and they have been made available by others, the Winchester names are much easier to trace than those of the rest of the County. Some people were identified in Hampshire, though, regrettably, no one in the Isle of Wight could be identified despite the large number of Island payers of the ulnage. The main sources of information were Keene's Winchester Survey, and the muniments of Winchester College, and for Southampton, some of the civic records. It would not be entirely facetious to suggest that the number of matches between ulnage payers and names in other records tells more about the survival of late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century records of Hampshire than it does about the ulnage records. The Winchester particular returns are listed in Appendix 14 and those of the County in Appendix 15.

The lists of names show, for each person, the numbers of cloths on which payment was made, together with the amount of subsidy and the amount of ulnage. In the case of the Winchester returns, the names were listed, with no geographical sub-division. Occasionally someone would be described by his occupation, presumably to differentiate him from another of the same name. For example, in the return for the period from 20 July 1394 to 24 November 1395³ William Cok was described as a fuller, John Hacell as a mason, and Gilbert as the Bailiff of Barton.⁴

The County lists differed from the Winchester lists because they gave an indication of where the tax was paid, in that they are subdivided by town. Indeed, the return of John Balon for the period 14 November 1401 to 12 November 1402 does not show numbers of cloths taxed nor

¹ All the lists are copies sent to the Exchequer. It seems likely that the medieval scribes consolidated the lists from the original documents, so that, generally, each taxpayer is only mentioned once, but this is not always the case as the tables show.

² The list of taxpayers included the names of a few women, some of whom are found in other records.

³ E 101/344/10

⁴ It is possible that he was acting as agent for weavers in Barton, which was then a suburb of Winchester, and is now subsumed into the City.

individual payments, but only lists the names of taxpayers for each town together with total payment for that place.

Carus-Wilson found that the names of later returns were repeated from year to year in a way that suggested copying and a failure to represent the number of cloths upon which the named individuals had paid tax. These earlier returns do not appear to have been constructed in the same way. For one thing, they did not cover standard time periods as did the later returns, and for another they contained details such as payments on half cloths, or Richard Lok of Winchester's payment on $9\frac{1}{2}$ cloths and 4 yards⁵. People who are inventing numbers to achieve a pre-arranged total, do not include that sort of detail. These returns appear to relate to real people who paid tax on real amounts of cloth. Most of the Particular returns were of the same type as this one.

Overview of Taxpayers

In this section, the general features of payment patterns will be considered. The details of who paid the ulnage is saved for a later section. The numbers of people paying for different numbers of cloths can be ascertained, for both City and County, and there is some evidence of the types of cloth which they presented to the ulnager. It is also possible to see the seasonal variation of cloth presentation, and thus to give some thought to the structure of the industry.

The four particular returns which have survived for Winchester between 1394 and 1403, cover only $43\frac{1}{2}$ months out of a possible 98, or just under half the period. The money collected in those 43 months was £109 8s $11\frac{3}{4}$ d which was just over one third of the total of £320 8s $5\frac{1}{2}$ d for the whole period. Therefore additional caution must be used in placing too much reliance on the figures, because the amount of money collected was not proportional to the amount of time in which it was collected, when the two are compared with the whole. There were 392 names mentioned as taxpayers and in all the equivalent of 6824 cloths were recorded as being ulnaged. Of these cloths, 2227, or a third, were accounted for by 17 men. These men each presented between 96 cloths (William Aysewell) and 222 cloths (Thomas Lavington). The next third of the cloths were presented by 50 people, men and women, who presented between 30 and 75 cloths each. (No one presented between 75 and 95 cloths.) Finally 414 people presented the last third of the cloths, namely ^{fewer} less than 30 each. Of this group 23 presented between 20 and

⁵ E 101/344/17. Return for 3 October 1401 to 21 September 1402.

29 cloths, 168 presented between 10 and 19 cloths, and 223 people presented fewer than 10 cloths, of which 170 presented no more than 4½ cloths each. These figures are displayed in Appendix 16.

It is unlikely that any individual could have been responsible for the production of more than 20 or 30 cloths in a year, by his own labours. In any case, the statement is somewhat meaningless, since the cloths were presented to the ulnager after they had been fulled, and weavers and fullers did not work in each others' crafts, especially when they were dealing with high class cloths. Since the cloths were presented over a period of three and a half years, most of them could have been presented by people who had themselves played a physical part in their production. However some people presented so many cloths that they must primarily have been financing production, rather than being active in the manufacturing processes. It will be shown later that the industry seems to have been heavily dependent on outside capital for its success.

It was the repetition of names which particularly called into question the validity of records which Carus-Wilson examined. For a ten year period, one would expect some continuity and some variation. There were 776 entries written in the four Winchester Particular returns. Sometimes individual names were found more than once in specific returns, and some names were found on more than one return. There was none of the slavish copying of names of which Carus-Wilson complained. When names are matched within and between returns, it is possible to identify about 390 people who paid ulnage in Winchester in the decade between 1394 and 1402.⁶ It is not, of course possible to speculate what the missing Particular returns might reveal. Thus, while there is no mechanical repetition of names, there is sufficient repetition to suggest that the ulnagers were using real names. The four accounts which have survived were the responsibility of four different ulnagers so the possibility of names being copied is reduced as they would not necessarily have had access to each other's records.

Having considered the Winchester returns, and the information they give, it is now relevant to consider those of the rest of the County in order to compare them with those of Winchester. Because they list the towns where the ulnage was collected, the County lists provide an indication of the cloth producing centres in the County. The table in Appendix 15 shows which towns were named in the returns. Far more cloths were accounted for in Winchester and its

⁶ This may slightly understate the number of individuals concerned as it would treat those with the same name as one person, unless they were differentiated in some way on the returns.

environs than were presented in the whole of the rest of the County. There seems to have been a collecting point, or deputy ulnager operating in Alton, because Alton is mentioned in each return, unlike Basingstoke which was once mentioned alone, once joined with Alton and twice omitted. Presumably the Alton ulnager attended in Basingstoke when required. Andover was not mentioned in the last return, so it is likely that a deputy ulnager from elsewhere must have collected the tax there. The particular account of Henry Joce, bailiff of Andover has not survived.⁷ There was a small cloth producing centre in the Fareham and Havant area, with Titchfield mentioned once. The only other mainland towns were Romsey and Southampton. There was a fair amount of production on the Isle of Wight. Having identified where broadcloths were being produced, it is possible to see that the trade was not distributed evenly within the County. At this time, there is no evidence of production west of Romsey in the New Forest or its fringes, such as the Avon valley. There was nothing between Romsey and Andover, nor was there anything north and east of Alton, in the Farnborough and Fleet direction. Similarly places between Alton and Fareham, such as Petersfield were not named.

The law required that the ulnage was paid before cloth was sold, offered for sale, or taken out of the county. A nearby ulnager would have to collect the charges if cloth was produced in a place other than where an ulnager, or his deputy was based,. Presumably, the deputy ulnagers had an agreement about which one was responsible for which towns or villages. The fact that different towns were listed in different returns suggests that some centres were only marginally cost effective to maintain. The way in which some towns were listed together, such as Basingstoke and Alton or Fareham and Titchfield in the 1401-2 return, suggests that the ulnage staff had recorded where they had been and the clerk who prepared the fair copy of the return had grouped the towns as a way of reducing the number of headings.

The County ulnagers collected £99 8s 4d during the period July 1394 to November 1403. Four separate Particular returns have survived, and these give details for £27 9s 4d or a little over a quarter of the sum for the whole period. This money was collected in 41 months out of a possible 112 months. Thus the particular returns show the collection of about a quarter of the revenue from a third of the time. There were no individual payers in the first rank as found in Winchester where all the largest payers presented their cloths. The biggest payment in the County was made by John Pulayn of Romsey who paid for the equivalent of 32 cloths. There were five other men of Romsey who paid for more than twenty cloths, and three from Alresford

⁷ May 1398 to May 1399.

and one at Farcham. No one else, outside Winchester, was responsible for so many cloths in the three and a half years for which particular accounts have survived. Most people in the County paid on fewer than 10 cloths and 114 out of the 174 named people paid on fewer than 5 cloths. The spread of payment for the mainland payers in Hampshire, outside Winchester, is shown in Appendix 15.

Some people appeared on the rolls for more than one town. For example, Simon Iremonger paid in Alresford in 1394 (11½ cloths), 1401 (no detail) and 1402 (5 cloths) and in Alton in 1394 (10½ cloths). John Parker paid ulnager on one cloth in Alton in 1401 and 1403, and John Parker paid an unspecified amount in Basingstoke in 1401-2. William Sturmy paid ulnager on small amounts of cloth in Alton and there is no reason to doubt that he is the same William Sturmy as the man who was the County ulnager between November 1395 and May 1397. He also paid ulnager on 5 cloths in Winchester in 1397-8 and on an unspecified number of cloths in Basingstoke in 1401-2. William Wollane provides another link between Alton and Basingstoke. Mostly he paid ulnager in Alton on small numbers of cloths, but a William Wullane was listed as a payer in Basingstoke in 1401-2.

It is possible that some Winchester men were having cloth made outside the City and paying ulnager outside, although there is always the possibility of two different men with the same names being wrongly identified as one person. For example, there were two John Plestowes, senior and junior. John senior lived in Alresford Road just outside Winchester⁸. Both men appeared on the Alton list, paying on 6 and 4½ cloths respectively in 1394. They also appeared on the Alresford return paying on 11 cloths and 8 cloths in 1394-5, and one of them only paid on 5 cloths in 1402-3. In addition, one or other of them also submitted a half cloth to the Winchester ulnager in 1398-9.

Another feature of the County list, not found in Winchester, was the practice whereby two or more people are jointly credited with presenting a collection of small cloths that was converted to a nominal number of whole cloths for tax purposes. The largest of these collections occurred in Romsey in 1394-95 when 96 small cloths equivalent to 33 cloths of assise were presented jointly by Thomas Brangwayne, Peter French, William Touker and Robert Touker. Brangwayne was reeve⁹ of Romsey, in 1390. He was one of the larger payers in Romsey for he also paid on

⁸ WS ii Item 1009, p.1065.

⁹ He is usually described as prepositus in the published list. E.g. WCM.16035, p.746.

40 dozens which were the equivalent of 20 cloths of assise. Peter French was responsible for payment of 28½ cloths in his own right, Robert Touker on 31 and William Touker on 20½. These latter three mostly presented dozens, which shows that the trade in Romsey was running on smaller capital sums than that of Winchester, because smaller cloths would need less capital to finance their production. It is likely that these men controlled a considerable amount of the cloth trade in Romsey. The only other payer of comparable size in Romsey was John Pulayn who paid on 63 dozens. The earlier records for Romsey show cloths called dozens being submitted, while the later returns show cloths of assise. These later returns were probably converting payments into taxation units, rather than depicting a change of production.

Southampton was not important in the production of woollens. For example, mayors of Winchester were submitting many cloths to the ulnagers, while those of Southampton were submitting the occasional one. This could be because the tradesmen of Winchester were wealthier than those of Southampton, but it is more likely that the rich men of Southampton invested their surplus cash in other ways than financing the local production of broadcloth.¹⁰ The two towns had different trading patterns, which would explain the different numbers of cloths presented.

On the Isle of Wight, the production was of kerseys. These cloths were smaller than broadcloths and paid subsidy at the rate of 2d a cloth, instead of the standard 4d. Similarly the ulnage fee was halved to ½d. Only three returns gave details for the Isle of Wight. The payment profile of the Isle of Wight is part of Appendix 16. Whereas the County returns showed people who paid for a single half-cloth, no one on the Island was shown as paying on less than two kerseys. The numbers of kerseys most commonly presented were 4, (18 people) 6 (23 people) and 8 (25 people). Odd numbers of cloths were much less commonly presented, but sufficient were recorded to suggest that the lack of records reflected the lack of presentations, and not merely administrative convenience in the way records were kept.

Thus the records enable us to determine where the cloth centres were within the County and to gain some idea of the scale of production within those centres. They show that the trade clustered in certain towns and other parts of the County saw little, if any, broadcloth production.

¹⁰ Southampton's lack of suitable water would have been a serious drawback for dyeing and finishing.

Rate of Payment

Dates of payment were not shown in the particular returns, so it is difficult to ascertain at what seasons of the year cloths were submitted to the ulnager, or whether production was evenly spread throughout the year. In his appendix, Heaton observed that returns for periods of more or less than a year may be distorted by the fact that "production was not uniform all the year round, winter being a bad period for drying and finishing cloths".¹¹ The Hampshire returns were for varying lengths of time, and therefore necessarily covered different parts of the year. By considering the rate of payment within each return, it is possible to estimate in which months more payments are made. Using the enrolled returns, which represent a more comprehensive set of figures than do the Particular accounts, tables of payment have been constructed. They give a guide, no more, of the times of the year when there was the most activity by the ulnagers. Because the returns for Winchester and the County were for different date ranges and on different scales of numbers of cloths, the rates of payment have been calculated separately. The calculations are shown in Appendix 17 and the tables are set out below as Tables 5-1 and 5-2.

By re-arranging the figures it was possible to find the average monthly rate collected by each ulnager over the ten year span. In both Winchester and the County there were different averages for different months of the year. Neither figures gave the same pattern as was found by Heaton in York where the winter months were slack, but Hampshire winters are less cold and have more daylight than has Yorkshire. The monthly variations in Winchester and Hampshire are illustrated in the two tables which are set out below. The two sets of returns yield slightly different patterns and it is difficult to be sure how much these are dependent of the figures that were available, and how much they reflect a different pattern in Winchester and the rest of the County. However, both show that the busiest time was in the early part of the calendar year, February, March and April for Winchester and December to March for the County. The low period of May in the County may be connected with the needs of horticulture or agriculture, as may be the July and August figures for Winchester. This variation in presentation of cloths to the ulnager may indicate that not all the people who produced cloth worked in the industry all the time. The reduced production in the summer would be consistent with part of the labour force being employed in agricultural pursuits.

¹¹ Herbert Heaton, *Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries* (Oxford, 1920) p.85.

Average Number of Cloths Unlaged in Winchester

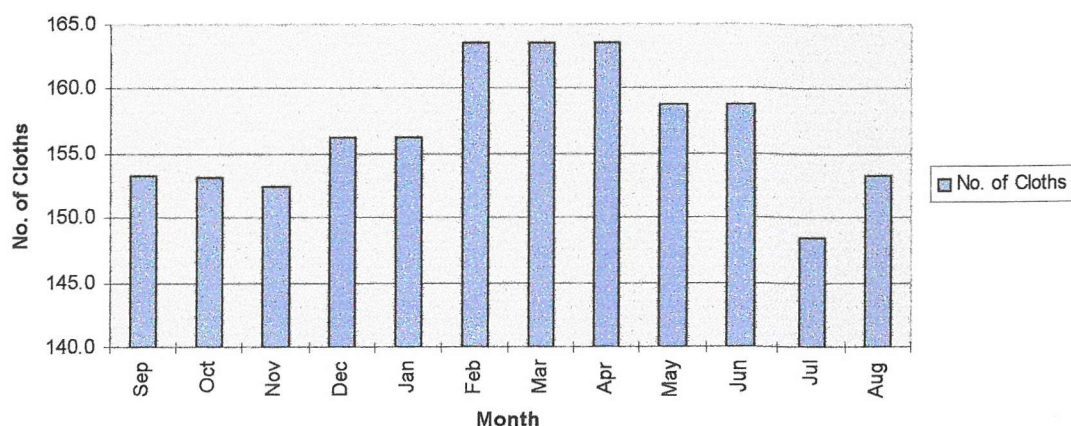


Table 5-1 Average Number of Cloths Unlaged in Winchester 1394-1402

Average Number of Unlaged Cloths in Hampshire

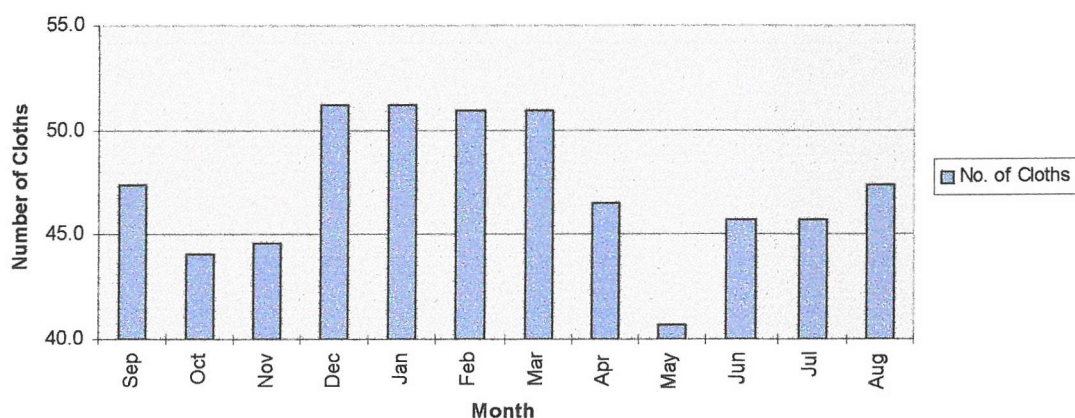


Table 5-2 Average Number of Cloths Unlaged in Hampshire 1394-1403

The figures must be treated with caution, because they are based on a rather small data base, and one which has had to be used obliquely. It therefore lacks the fine detail which was available for York where the particular return for the period between September 1394 to September 1395 was set out on a daily basis, so the exact number of cloths unlaged each day is known.¹² The figures for York, shown in Table 5-3, reveal much more variation between months than do the calculated figures for Winchester and Hampshire. These latter figures are derived in such a way that their full variation is unlikely to be apparent. The Yorkshire figures showed peaks in April and August, with a lesser one in October. December and June were months when few cloths

¹² John Lister, *The Early Yorkshire Woollen Trade* (York, 1924) pp.47-95.

were ulnaged in York. The June low was likely to be caused by diversion to agriculture or horticulture, and presumably the December low arose from the short hours of daylight in which to work. During half of December no ulnage was paid at all. However before cloths can be presented to the ulnager, they have to be woven and then finished. Goldberg, in his analysis of the Yorkshire weaving industry found that weaving was most commonly carried out in the winter and in April and May. This finding does not contradict Heaton's assessment that finishing was not carried out in the winter. Cloths could be woven in the winter and finished in the spring when the weather was warmer and the days longer. Goldberg found that weaving was an alternative occupation to agriculture and carried out when the demands of agriculture were at their lowest levels.¹³ He set this in the context of rural weaving, particularly by women. There is no evidence to show whether any substantial numbers of women were weaving in Hampshire. The demands of agriculture could affect both men and women.

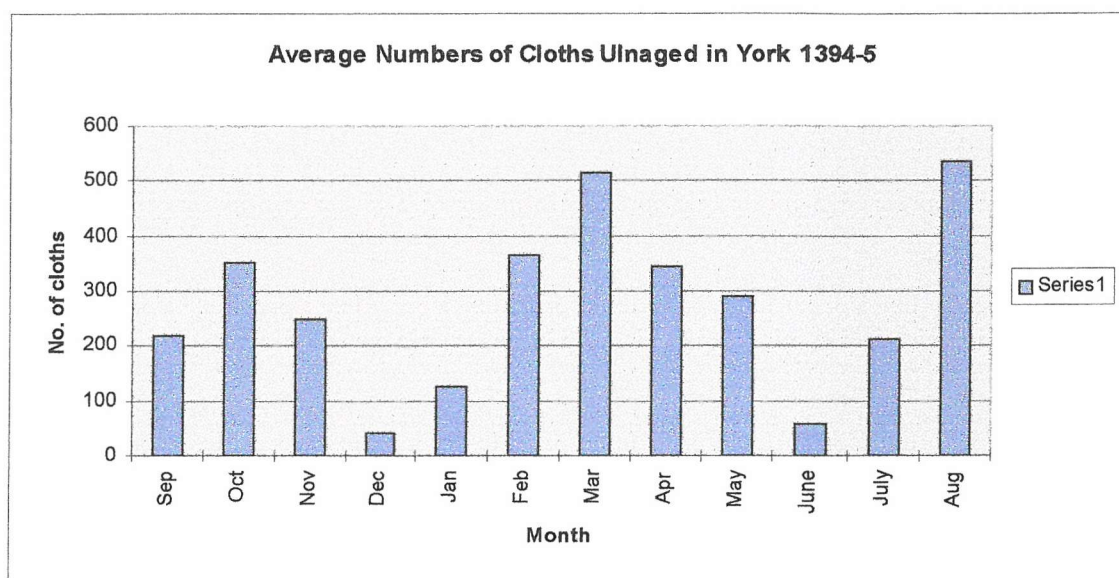


Table 5-3 Average Numbers of Cloths Ulnaged in York 1394/5

The monthly variation has been discussed, but there was a further change in the figures over time, and that was an overall drop in the annual number of cloths presented. Quite apart from the seasonal variation, there was a downward trend in the returns. These figures show that 1394-5 was a particularly good time for broadcloth production with an average monthly production in Winchester of 196 cloths. By 1402/3 the average monthly production was 144 cloths, and this was better than the figure for the previous three years. The descent was not even, nor did Winchester and the County follow exactly the same pattern, but the figures for

¹³ P.J.P. Goldberg "Women's Work, Women's Role, in the Late-Medieval North" in Michael Hicks ed. *Profit, Piety And The Professions In Later Medieval England* (Gloucester, 1990) p.44.

1402-3 were substantially lower in both areas than they had been in 1394. Bridbury noted a similar drop in Salisbury.¹⁴

One possible explanation is that the ulnagers were not accounting for all the revenue which they collected, or they were not collecting all that was due.¹⁵ The fact that the Exchequer moved to farming the tax, instead of collecting it directly, may partly have arisen from official concern about the probity of the tax gatherers. However, it is always possible that the ulnagers were collecting the tax as conscientiously as before and that there was less to collect. It should be noted, however, that the joint farm for Winchester and the County was set at £30 per annum in January 1404. This seems to be a reasonable annual fee when compared with the moneys that had been collected in the preceding years, and suggests that the previous figures were acceptable as a basis for the farm.

In conclusion, the figures seem to have a reasonable consistency and on balance probably reflect the state of the high-class woollen cloth industry in Winchester and Hampshire between 1394 and 1403.

The Winchester Taxpayers

Having established that the lists seem generally based in reality, it becomes possible to examine them to ascertain what can be determined about the nature of the taxpayers.¹⁶ There are some difficulties as it is only possible to determine the occupation of some of the taxpayers. Some of them were described as having different occupations at different times during their lives.¹⁷ Some

¹⁴ A.R. Bridbury, *Medieval English Clothmaking* (London, 1982) p.73.

¹⁵ The drop of production in these two counties may well have been real and not merely apparent. If they were real, then it would be necessary to examine the pattern of demand to see whether unsold cloth made in earlier years was being used to supply the export trade.

¹⁶ The biographical notes in Keene's *Survey of Medieval Winchester* ii have been much used for this section. The information that they contain about payment of ulnage was compiled by someone who did not understand the particular returns, but I have taken ulnage information from original sources, so have not used what is found in Keene. For example, 40 half cloths (subsidy 6s 8d) has been rendered as 40½ cloths which carries a subsidy of 13s 6d., (entry for John Dollyng on p.1216). The entry for Thomas Ede claims that he paid ulnaged on 18½ cloths in 1398-9. In fact he paid on 15 cloths of assize and 1 dozen (which paid at half the rate).

¹⁷ Penn and Dyer have drawn attention to the occupational flexibility of the labour force of the 1350s, citing examples such as "brewers and spinners" or "threshers and fishermen". They were of the opinion that such descriptions were accurate and that workers turned their hands to different occupations at varying times of the year. In this context, it is not surprising to see the tradesmen of Winchester attributed to different occupations at different times in their lives, as they too migrated from one occupation to another, even if over a period of years rather than by season. See: Simon A.C. Penn & Christopher Dyer *Wages And Earnings In Late Medieval England: Evidence From The Enforcement Of The Labour Laws*, Econ. H.R., 2nd Ser. 43, (1990) 356-376

men were only described by reference to their public office and it is not possible to determine which of these offices were full time paid occupations and which were additional to their main livelihood. Civic office will be discussed separately. Where a person has two or more occupations given in the records, the first occupation given has been taken as the principal one. This may not always lead to accurate classification but has the merit of presenting a consistent approach. It happens that there is a tendency for these pairs to cancel each other out, thus there was a merchant who was also a weaver and another man who was described first as a weaver then as a merchant.

Needless to say, the records show the taxpayers at various stages in their lives. For example, there was William Inge who was approaching his last decade. He had been economically active as early as the 1360s and had died by 1414.¹⁸ He paid tax on a total of 70 cloths in the four returns which have survived. At the other extreme, was John Veel who was at the beginning of his career when he paid tax on two cloths in 1402. He was a merchant who became the ulnager for City and County between 1422 and 1432. He seems to have died in 1440.¹⁹ Between these extremes lie a whole range of people, whose occupations will be considered at some length because they cast light on the structure of the industry.

As might be expected, the people about whom something is known include more of those who handled large numbers of cloths than of those who handled few cloths. The comparison is as follows:

¹⁸ WS ii p.1270.

¹⁹ WS ii p.1375.

Number of Cloths each	Number of Taxpayers	Number about whom anything is known
>95	17	16
76-95	0	0
70-75	3	2
60-69	4	0
50-59	8	4
40-49	11	6
30-39	24	9
25-29	8	3
20-24.5	25	6
15-19	28	13
10-14.5	41	15
5-9	53	16
$\frac{1}{2}$ -4 $\frac{1}{2}$	170	49
Total	392	139

Table 5-4 Winchester Ulnage payers about whom information is available

Thus out of 392 names, biographical information is available about 139 people or 35% of the people whose names were recorded in the surviving Particular accounts for Winchester. The information varies from the very sparse, such as a relationship, through to a mass of data about family links, occupation and public offices held. Thus there are several ways in which the taxpayers can be analysed - by their relationships to each other, by their occupations and by their public offices. A study of the relationships is unlikely to be productive because the information is very scattered and is unlikely to add anything to the study of the ulnage records. The other two sources of information about these people are more productive and will be addressed. The records show glimpses, snapshots, of the taxpayers' lives, and can only be used to give an impression. They are not comprehensive enough to enable an in-depth sociological study to be made. Nonetheless, there are a sufficient number that the impressions are likely to be soundly based.

Occupations

Of the 139 people in Winchester whose occupation could be determined just over half were involved with clothing. A quarter gave their main occupation in the food trades, 5% were in the building trade, and this left 19% in other occupations.

Trade Group	Whole Sample %
Building	5
Clothing	53
Food	23
Other	19
<i>Total (number)</i>	<i>139</i>

Table 5-5 Division Of Ulnage Payers By Trade Group (Winchester 1394-1403.)

The fact that only half the taxpayers in Winchester gave their occupations as textile workers raises questions about the financing of the broadcloth industry. The implications are that the industry was financed from a base that drew in funds from outside.

Men engaged in cloth production

Of the men whose occupations can be determined, about half were described in such a way that primarily associated them with the cloth trade. There were those who seemed to have stayed mainly within the confines of their craft, or only ventured into activities which were closely allied to the craft. There were others who traded much more widely and were economically active in quite different activities. When classifying the ulnage payers by occupation, it is necessary to bear in mind Swanson's warning that

Even those men who did specialise in the manufacture of a specific type of goods are misrepresented by the systemisation of medieval records. Artisans seldom restricted themselves to one branch of manufacture ... Nor did they limit themselves to manufacturing; indeed if they were to make any money at all it was imperative that they did not. Artisans worked in the service industries, kept livestock, ventured into the victualling trades, in short took any opportunity they could to make a little extra money.²⁰

This is certainly true of Winchester, and Swanson's warning that this diversity is often not apparent in official records is timely.

²⁰ Heather Swanson *Medieval Artisans* (Oxford, 1989) p.6.

Of the craftsmen who were not obviously diversifying, there were five men described as weavers, although rather more of both fullers and dyers. (Other cloth workers, such as tailors were not found paying ulnage in Hampshire at this time.) Only five men were primarily described as weavers and all five of them seem to have been economically active in the fourteenth rather than the fifteenth century. Of these five so-called weavers an examination of their activities shows that two only appear to have been essentially working weavers, one seems to have been primarily a dyer and the other two were primarily merchants. This lends weight to the argument that weavers were not prime generators of the finance necessary to fund the cloth trade of Winchester. Swanson found a similar situation in York.²¹ Her analysis of the economic activities of the weavers was that they were not greatly represented in the ulnage accounts, although she found “that there was a substantial number of independent and reasonably prosperous weavers in the City”. She assumed that they were not much represented in the ulnage accounts because they sold their cloths on before they were ready for marketing. Alternatively, she suggested, that weavers frequently worked on private contracts and would not therefore have owned the cloths they wove. She said of weavers that evidence from their wills “shows that, although as a group weavers were far from wealthy, the craft always supported a number of prosperous artisans who owned more than one loom and whose output during the year must have been of a respectable size”. There is nothing in the Winchester records which is at variance with these conclusions.

Of the Winchester weavers, three presented modest numbers of cloths, between eight and twenty, but the other two were trading on a much grander scale. One of these, John Atterok (53 cloths), was described as a weaver in 1390, but he appears to have been an active dyer as well. In 1386 he was arraigned for discharging woad waste, and in 1395 he took possession of a dye house, with all the vessels in it in Wongar Street (modern Middle Brook Street). He was clearly wealthy enough to commission the weaving of cloth, because he was one of those who had cloth woven outside the liberty of Winchester in 1410.²² The other, Thomas Lavington, was described as a weaver in 1377. In the following year he was described as a wealthy merchant of the suburb, which is more credible. That he was heavily involved in both the wool and cloth trades is apparent from his various dealings. For example, he had been Constable of the Winchester Staple in 1374, and was still dealing in wool in 1402. He paid duty on more cloths than any other individual, being shown as paying for the equivalent of nearly 222 cloths on the

²¹ Heather Swanson, *Medieval Artisans* (Oxford, 1989) p.31.

²² WS ii p.1334.

four detailed returns. His family owned lands extensively within the County at Fulflood, Weeke and Headbourne Worthy, as well as tenements in Kingsgate Street, Winchester.²³

There are rather more records relating to fullers, and this probably reflects the fact that fullers were more likely to present cloths for payment. There is some confusion in the records between fullers and dyers. It is quite apparent that in Winchester the two trades were not rigorously kept apart. For example, Richard Donmar (15 cloths), was described as a fuller, but the only local information about him relates to the discharge of woad waste in 1386 and the purchase of woad in 1392.²⁴ Like the weavers, the fullers varied from those who were obviously working fullers, to those who were employers of fullers, their personal involvement seeming unlikely. It may be that more capital was required of a man before he could become a master fuller than was the case in some trades. Herbert Heaton found that, in York, a fuller was required to own property to the value of four marks so that he could reimburse the owner of any cloth which he might lose or damage.²⁵

Perhaps because they had more capital, the fullers, unlike the working weavers, seem to have been drawn into wider trading. In particular they seem to have been involved with dyeing. Hulton writing of Coventry²⁶ and Swanson writing of York²⁷, both found that in those towns fullers were a poorer group than weavers. Swanson observed that Winchester was different in the century between 1350 and 1450, because the fullers were dominant, and there were similar developments in Colchester. She suggested that the presence of fulling mills in and close to the town, as was the case with Winchester, may have been significant in this rise in power of the fullers.

Examples of commercial diversity are seen in the activities of John Pury the younger, John Mabely and Richard Mitchell. John Pury (245 cloths jointly with his father) had a tenter ground

²³ WS ii p.1282.

²⁴ WS ii p.1216.

²⁵ "The master fuller, in his operations, would receive large numbers of pieces from weavers, to be fulled in his mill. He might tear or spoil a piece in the fulling stocks, or he might even lose it. It was necessary therefore that some security should be provided to those who placed their wares in the fuller's hands. The craft ordinances made provision to meet this possibility, and declared that the would-be master should not merely be proficient in his art, but should also prove that he possessed property to the value of four marks, so that if he lost a cloth entrusted to him he would have the wherewithal to make good his loss to the owner of the piece". Herbert Heaton *The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries* (Oxford, 1920) p.36.

²⁶ Mary Hulton, *True as Coventry Blue* (Coventry, 1995) p.31.

²⁷ Heather Swanson, *Medieval Artisans* (Oxford, 1989) p.41.

in Buck Street, and was selling dye in 1391.²⁸ John Mabely was described as a fuller, but he is another who has left traces of wider economic activity than solely fulling cloth. In 1401 he was dyeing cloth in Winchester and in 1402 was commissioning the weaving of cloth. In 1403 he was dealing in both wool and lambswool.²⁹ The final example is Richard Mitchell who was another man with varied interests. He was similarly involved in more than fulling, and was described as a dyer as well as a fuller. That he was a working fuller is suggested by the fact that he had fuller's shears amongst his possessions. There was evidence of his exporting cloths through Southampton in 1403-5, and he had cloth woven outside the liberty of Winchester in 1410-11.³⁰ Mabely and Mitchell, in particular, seem typical of these well-to-do working fullers. They were dealing in wool and cloth, and financing various stages of cloth production. They were men of substance whose wealth was rooted in cloth.

The fullers, therefore, are shown to be men of substance, and some of them were clearly wealthy. It is now appropriate to consider the dyers. The records left by the dyers suggest more specialisation than the fullers. Of the ten men who were described primarily as dyers, one was also a brewer, two were recorded as owning wool cloth and one as owning yarn which is less diverse than the activities of the fullers. Swanson found a relatively low involvement of dyers in presentation of cloths to the ulnagers and suggested that this arose because they were investing in dye-stuffs rather than in cloth-production *per se*. The Winchester ulnage returns do not support her statement of a relatively low involvement of dyers, but as she has pointed out, the various cloth towns of medieval England each had their own trading patterns.

The business activities of William Wygge (140 cloths) included handling dyestuffs and he was probably a working dyer.³¹ In 1377 he was granted a tenement and two shops in Wongar Street "with all the lead and bronze vessels stand there". In 1402 he supported the ordinance restricting weaving and fulling to the City.³² These factors all suggest that he was one of the powerful men controlling the city's cloth industry, and firmly rooted within it. A less powerful man was William Green (10 cloths). He rented a tenement over a cellar and a dye-house in the

²⁸ WS ii p.1327.

²⁹ WS ii p.1290.

³⁰ WS ii p.1297.

³¹ William Wygge was the name of one of the 25 men listed as a rebel following the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. Two other names on that list are also to be found on the turn of the century ulnage returns, namely William Morrene and Henry Clerc. (Derek Keene, *Survey Of Medieval Winchester Parts i And ii (Winchester Studies 2)* (Oxford, 1985) p.396.

³² WS ii p.1393.

High Street in 1417 for which he paid 13s 4d rent annually".³³ Thus most of the dyers represented in the ulnag records seem to have been well off and often economically active in more than just dyeing.

Having considered those men who were apparently primarily cloth manufacturers and processors, it is now appropriate to consider those cloth producers who had secondary occupations. With one exception the weavers did not fall into this category. Since individual wealth seems to come from dealing rather than from making, and weaving is very labour-intensive, this may explain why the weavers were not the people who presented large numbers of cloths. The most notable exception was Thomas Lavington, who probably did very little weaving himself, if any. John Atterok was also commissioning cloths to be woven outside the liberty, but that activity was still within his own trade, although he had diversified into dyeing in the 1390s.

Swanson observed that dealing in manufactured products or in raw materials needed by producers of cloth was far more profitable than being a producer.³⁴ She wrote

For anyone who wanted to increase their income, therefore, it was best to concentrate on the market and not on production. There was little percentage in investing in industrial plant, much more sense in putting out work at piece-rates to supposedly independent artisans. This form of small-scale domestic production has been seen as more characteristic of rural industry, But to a certain extent the system was adopted among urban mercantile entrepreneurs and even some of the wealthier artisans. Some industries lent themselves well to this form of production: ... The evidence is clearest in the cloth industry where merchants, weavers and in some places fullers put out wool and yarn to be dyed and woven.

The small number of weavers who presented cloths to the Winchester ulnag, and the references to people who wanted to have cloths woven outside the liberty of the City, suggests that the practice was endemic in Winchester.

Swanson stressed the financial advantages of using capital to monopolise "wholesale supplies and the distribution system. The artisan all too often was dependent on a supplier who

³³ WS ii Item 90, pp.513-4. It was said that the dyehouse contained "magnum plumbum in quodam fornace" which was presumably a large lead vessel which could be heated. It was considered that the dyehouse, if well run, should produce a revenue of 40s for the landlord, who would charge 16d for each dyeing. This would allow Green 26s 8d a year for his labour. Whether this calculation had ever been valid, by 1426 Green had gone and the tenement was producing no rent at all.

³⁴ Heather Swanson, *Medieval Artisans* (Oxford, 1989) pp.129, 130.

thereafter was exonerated from responsibility for the quality of the finished product'. There is plenty of evidence that some men were concentrating on supplying raw materials, and on commissioning work, rather than working as producers themselves and this is most clearly evidenced from the activities of the dyers.

Other men combined two separate occupations. For example, John Pury senior (245 cloths jointly with his son) was described as a brewer between 1374 and 1380. In 1364 he was charged with cutting cloth without paying custom, so he clearly was a working clothman.³⁵ However, it was the fullers who showed the most obvious evidence of diversification in Winchester. This pattern was emerging by the mid-fourteenth century. Richard Bempch (17 cloths) was described as a citizen and fuller in 1352 when he held a tenement in Tanner Street, extending to the water, with a tenter. This tenement was rebuilt by 1395 and there were three tenters there. In 1364 he was Warden of the Fullers' Guild, and in 1365 was described as a merchant. He diversified further in the 1370s when he was recorded as being a brewer.³⁶ Thus, although fulling was his basic industry, it was a springboard for other forms of economic activity. He died in 1395-6, and the cloths he submitted to the ulnager were all recorded on the return of 1394-5.

One example of this many-faceted approach is seen in the activities of Thomas Smyth (192½ cloths). He was described as a fuller between 1392 and 1400, a tapster between 1403-4, a brewer in 1414, and a draper between 1412 and 1417. He also found time, on three occasions, to be mayor of Winchester amongst other public offices. Despite his diversification into brewing his connection with the cloth industry continued. In 1401 he inherited the four tenters in Tanner Street of which he had been in possession by 1395. At his death in 1421 he left his widow another tenement and plot in Tanner Street which was equipped with a "rekke". He dealt in wool in 1402, had cloth woven outside the liberty in 1410, and was dealing in cloth during the next decade.³⁷ Another example of diversity was Richard Horsman (12½ cloths), who was called a fuller in 1411, but a tapster at other times. In 1415 he sold dye and in 1421 there are civic records of his selling cloth.³⁸

³⁵ WS ii p.1327. Brewing and dyeing are two trades with much affinity. In both, the raw material has to be prepared in closely stipulated ways, and then heated within set parameters. It would not be suitable to use the same vessels for both operations, because of the toxic nature of most dyestuffs, but the technology is much the same

³⁶ WS ii p.1160.

³⁷ WS ii p.1350.

³⁸ WS ii p.1265.

Thus concludes the review of economic activity of those who were primarily weavers, fullers and dyers and who presented cloths to the ulnagers. They are only a selection of the weavers, fullers and dyers in Winchester. Others, particularly weavers, were not seen in the ulnage records because they did not present cloths to the ulnagers.

Merchants

Some people were involved in the cloth industry, although they would have described themselves in ways which have led them to be classified in other trade sectors. The people most obviously in this category were the merchants, and it has already been shown that some cloth workers were also merchants. Conversely, some merchants dealt in cloth at various times. For example, John Veel (2 cloths) had cloth fulled in 1423,³⁹ and was shown in the Southampton Brokage books of 1439-40 as dealing in soap amongst other commodities. He also dealt in cotton in 1423, which was a rare item at that date. John West (20 cloths) was both a merchant and a brewer in 1389. In 1400 he owned both linen and woollen cloths.

It would be reasonable to expect merchants who were also drapers to be dealing in the expensive cloths that were subject to ulnage, and John Dyniton was one such. (3 cloths) His alias was Scherer which suggests that he was actively involved in cloth finishing. He exported cloth through Southampton in 1395 and was still trading in cloth in 1408. He had had cloth seized for trying to evade the ulnage, as was discussed in chapter 4. Apart from his cloth dealing, he was a vintner.⁴⁰ This seems logical because merchants who took cloths to Southampton would have had opportunity to buy casks of wine there and Dyniton obviously took that opportunity. The small number of cloths which he presented adds to the picture that merchants involved in wholesale international cloth dealing, were not, on the whole, the people who presented cloths to the ulnager. This impression is supported by an examination of the activities of John Choude. He was a merchant and vintner who presented only five cloths to the ulnager. He exported cloth to Bordeaux in 1411 and was trading in cloth in 1412. In 1426 he was trading in iron powder.⁴¹ It seems likely that dealing in iron and tin goods may have been one of his principal activities.

³⁹ WS ii p.1375. See also Barbara Bunyard, *The Brokage Book of Southampton 1439-40* (Southampton, 1941) pp.76, 95.

⁴⁰ WS ii p.1213.

⁴¹ WS ii p 1192. Iron was used as a mordant in dyeing.

There were two very wealthy merchants who presented cloth for ulnaging. Hugh Cran (2½ cloths) was one and Mark le Faire (119½ cloths) was the other. Hugh Cran can only have invested in cloths almost by chance, as this small number of cloths does nothing to draw attention to his wealth. He was a merchant, a draper and a vintner. In 1379 he had woad delivered from London but there is no evidence that he was involved with fulling or weaving although he had been ulnager in 1390 and mayor of the Winchester staple in the 1380s.⁴² He owned much property in Winchester.

Mark le Faire on the other hand was much more obviously involved with cloth. He was exporting cloth through Southampton between 1371 and 1404 and for much of that time was also dealing in wine. He also traded in dyestuffs, selling woad in 1396 and potash in 1401. He had cloth woven outside the liberty in 1411.⁴³ The fact that he had had some cloth seized for evasion of the ulnage had not been not a barrier to his becoming farmer of the ulnage between 1408 and 1413. He was one of the wealthiest and most important men in Winchester at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Dyer⁴⁴ says of him that he was

a merchant with a primary interest in the import trade, ... in the early fifteenth century (he) is thought to have combined an income from rents of £26 per annum with trading profits in a normal year of £100 or more.

Dyer compares le Faire with other merchants, who, with goods valued at less than £50 would expect an annual income of less than £10. This comparison shows just how rich le Faire was.

He was one of the few Winchester merchants who ^{was} ~~were~~ exporting cloth through Southampton around 1400.⁴⁵ It is perhaps a sign of the onset of the decline of Winchester that this was so. According to Keene

very few Winchester merchants can be identified as cloth exporters in the particular customs accounts for Southampton of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, when the City's industry was at its most prosperous and its records fullest. In 1396 it appears that Winchester merchants were responsible for no more than 2% of the cloth exported by all merchants through Southampton and no more than 13% exported by native merchants. Five merchants were involved viz. John Canner, John Dyniton, Mark le Faire, John Gylmyne,

⁴² WS ii p.1206.

⁴³ WS ii p.1228

⁴⁴ Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1990) p.194.

⁴⁵ Derek Keene, *Survey of Medieval Winchester part I* (Winchester Studies 2) (Oxford, 1985) p.511.

William Resone. In 1403 there were four merchants viz. William Archer, Mark le Faire, Richard Mitchell, and William Osbarn.

Of these Dyniton, Faire, Archer, and Mitchell presented cloths to the ulnager, but only Faire presented a substantial number. It would seem that dealing in cloth in Winchester was not a major activity for the small community of cloth exporters who lived there and used Southampton as a port of export.

Victuallers

The initial classification of the occupations of the taxpayers already undertaken has shown that there was a considerable investment in broadcloth by people involved in victualling in its widest sense. Somewhat unexpected were the fishmongers who presented cloths for ulnage, although Swanson found that the same happened in York.⁴⁶ In Winchester, the most significant of these was John Blake (182½ cloths) who was a fishmonger between 1364 and 1420. He was also described as a merchant in 1371 and at various times as a carter⁴⁷. He invested in cloth, for example, when he commissioned weaving and fulling cloth outside the liberty in 1411, despite the fact he was warden of the new fulling mill in Winchester in 1409-10. He had his own woad-pit in Winchester in 1414 so presumably brought his cloths back into the City to dye them. He held extensive amounts of property in Winchester some of which were in Buck Street and included a garden with a rack. Presumably fishmongers, like vintners, made regular trips to Southampton and so built up the connections which meant that they could sell cloth in the port, and had suitable transport on which to transport their wares.

There were a number of other men whose wealth derived from victualling, but who dealt in cloth. For example, Henry Barstapele (15 cloths) was variously called a merchant or a brewer, although in 1407 he held a corner tenement in Wongar Street (Middle Brook Street) which by 1417 had passed to a fuller.⁴⁸ Another vintner was John French (7½ cloths) who dealt in sheepskins and cloths as well as importing wine and exporting cloths through Southampton.⁴⁹ John Snel (41 cloths) was a tapster who dealt in cloth, although in 1423 he sold a weaver's loom.⁵⁰ Had he perhaps purchased a loom which he hired out to weavers, or which he hired weavers to work?

⁴⁶ Heather Swanson, *Medieval Artisans* (Oxford, 1989) p.19.

⁴⁷ WS ii p.1163. It is possible that more than one person is described in the Survey.

⁴⁸ WS ii p.1155.

⁴⁹ WS ii p.1235

⁵⁰ WS ii p.1351. He was also known as John Redhead.

There were a few other tradesmen involved in cloth dealing and victualling about whom biographical details have survived. They come from trade groups too little represented to form classes of their own. For example there was Edmund Pickard (26 cloths) a skinner and brewer, and in 1402 supervisor of works at the fulling mill.⁵⁰ Thomas Smale (21½ cloths) was a butcher who also dealt in linen cloth and kerchiefs and became ulnager in 1415.⁵¹ Others include Thomas Sutton (1½ cloths) a hosier and draper,⁵² Nicholas Tanner (4 cloths) a vintner who also owned wool,⁵³ and Roger Couper (4 cloths) who was a cooper.⁵⁴

Other Occupations

Building workers were classified into a distinctive trade sector, because there were seven men who came into this category. Four of them were carpenters, two were helliers⁵⁵ and one was a mason. Five of them presented 12 cloths or fewer, and one man, John Whythed, a hellier, presented 22. However William Bolt presented 197 cloths. He was a carpenter, but appears also to have been a dyer.⁵⁶

The final group who speculated or dealt in cloths were those who in modern parlance would be called the professional men. In this group are to be found John Shalden (½ cloth) a clerk who was butler of the cathedral priory, who, by way of commerce, owned linen cloth, shirts and smocks and in 1411 also owned vats.⁵⁷ The clerk of the City, John Steer (100½ cloths) had cloth woven outside the liberty in 1411 and was ulnager of Winchester in 1399 and of the combined City and County from 1403 to 1408.⁵⁸

To summarise, it has been possible to identify about 139 men sufficiently to give their occupations.⁵⁹ They have been sub-divided into four trade classifications, namely building, clothing, food and other. Building was the smallest group with only seven men in it. They must

⁵⁰ WS ii p.1327.

⁵¹ WS ii p.1349.

⁵² WS ii p.1361.

⁵³ WS ii p.1364.

⁵⁴ WS ii pp.1138, 1205. He was also called Roger Ryng.

⁵⁵ Helliers tiled roofs.

⁵⁶ WS ii p.1167. It is possible that there were two men called William Bolt and that the biographies of the two have been confused.

⁵⁷ WS ii p.1342.

⁵⁸ WS ii p.1357.

⁵⁹ That is assuming that each name relates to one man only: it is known that certain names were held by more than one man.

surely be prime examples of men who were investing in the cloth industry rather than actively participating in production. There were 26 names in the "other" group which included nine merchants and six leather workers, amongst such exotica as the cathedral organist. There are 32 men in the food group and 74 in the clothing group. This last group included 17 weavers, 15 dyers and 23 fullers. The group also included such specialists as drapers, hosiers, tailors and a glover, so was wider than solely the producers of cloth.⁶⁰

Civic Offices held by Winchester Taxpayers

One aspect of some of the taxpayers' activities about which information is available is their holding of public office. The surviving evidence gives an impression that many of the taxpayers held public office, and were men of standing within the community. A caveat is necessary at this point. It may be that only men of affairs leave records which survive five centuries, and the figures may be distorted. It would only be possible to make definitive statements if the ulnage payers were to be compared with the population at large. It is not practical to undertake that comparison, so we cannot see whether the ulnage payers were more or less likely to take public office than non-ulnage payers. It is however feasible to consider the activities of those for whom records survive. The other factor which reduces the amount of information available about many Winchester ulnage payers is that the writ of ulnage extended to the suburbs and soke, and many of the payers lived in the soke so were not eligible for civic office in the City. Records do not survive in any quantity to show who held public office in the Soke or elsewhere. Thus one way and another it seems unlikely that a study of the ulnage payers and their holding of public office will do more than represent a cross section of businessmen in Winchester and their administration of their City. It is, nonetheless, worth making such a study because it helps to establish the status of the ulnage payers.

There are 85 names from the Winchester list of ulnage payers about whom there is some evidence of their public office holding. The numbers in each payment band have been compared with the numbers for whom there is evidence of their having held public office and the result displayed in Table 5-6. The people who paid the ulnage on the most cloths are disproportionately represented. Thus of the 17 people who paid on 95 cloths or more, 12 of them are known to have held public office in Winchester, compared with 21 of the 170 who

⁶⁰ Chope found fewer tax payers when the ulnager worked in the fairs of Devon in 1395/6 than when he visited the villagers in 1396/7. He concluded that at village level the tax payers were the actual weavers of cloth. However, he does not say why he came to this conclusion, although it is an obvious one, which does not necessarily make it correct. See: R. Pearce Chope "The Aulnager in Devon" in *Transactions of the Devon Association*, 44 (1912) pp.578-9.

paid on 4½ cloths or fewer; these figures are consistent with the concept that the wealthier citizens played a larger part in civic affairs which all helps to bolster the credibility of the ulnage returns.

Number of Cloths	Number of ulnage payers	Number holding public office	% holding public office
>95	17	12	70
76-95	0	0	0
70-75	3	2	67
60-69	4	0	0
50-59	8	4	50
40-49	11	5	45
30-39	24	6	25
25-29	8	2	25
20-24.5	25	7	28
15-19.5	28	8	29
10-14.5	41	9	22
5-9.5	53	9	17
0.5-4.5	170	21	12
Total	392	85	

Table 5-6 Incidence of Office Holding by Ulnage payers

This table represents about half the cloths on which tax was paid, because that is the fraction on which these 85 people paid. They, however, represent only about one fifth of the taxpayers. Thus the list of office holders is not a microcosm of the whole. It is skewed towards the larger payers, and the small payers are under-represented. One would expect the more affluent to play a greater part in public affairs than the less affluent. The wealthier members of society can more easily afford to take time off from their normal business of income gathering. They also have more incentive to ensure that the area where they live is well managed, as they have more to lose if there is a breakdown in law and order. It is also not unknown for them to manage affairs in such a way as to give themselves pecuniary advantage, either directly or indirectly, and there is no reason to think that these criteria did not apply in fourteenth and fifteenth-century Winchester.

Of the 12 men in the first division, five had served as MP for Winchester including Mark le Faire who had held the office twelve times. He had also been mayor on six occasions. Three other men had been mayor of Winchester. Every one of them had served as bailiff at some time or another. (Winchester had two bailiffs at any given time.) Most of these men had held other civic office, with the exception of Thomas Lavington whose only other recorded public office was Constable of the Winchester staple at various times in the 1370s and 1380s. Lavington probably lived outside the City, although he owned property in Tanner Street. Two of these 12 men were ulnagers after 1394, namely John Steer and Mark le Faire. Some of the men in this group had been responsible for the fabric of Winchester itself. John Steer, who had also been clerk of the City, had been supervisor of works on the City walls. One of the two men called John Newman was supervisor of work at the fulling mill, and John Blake became its warden. Gilbert Forester was supervisor of the fulling mill at Coytebury.

The next third of cloths was paid for by people who each presented between 30 and 75 cloths. In all there were 50 of these people of whom 17, about a third, have been recorded as holding public office. The man who played the largest part in civic affairs in this group was William Inge who was a merchant of the Winchester staple in the 1360s and Constable in 1383/4. He had been mayor of Winchester on four occasions and MP on two, as well as holding various lesser offices. Apart from him, John at Roke, William Morene and Walter Bolour each served as mayor of the City. The others held such offices as aldermen, constable, bailiff, or auditor. Some of them, as in the first group, were described as "citizen" and some of them were members of the guild merchant.

The third group to be considered will be those who paid for between 20 and 29 cloths. There were nine of these who held office out of a possible 33. There were two mayors in this group, Edmund Pickard and Thomas Smale. Both these men also served as MP as did John West, esquire. The group contained a selection of bailiffs, collectors, constables and aldermen. This group also included men whose public office was concerned with practical matters. For example, Edmund Pickard had been supervisor of the work on the City walls, and John West was supervisor of the walls in 1393.⁶¹ One member of this group, held national office, rather than local office: John Draper was an esquire to Richard II.⁶² Only one man in this group

⁶¹ WS ii p.1382.

⁶² J.M. Kaye ed., *Cartulary of God's House, Southampton I* (Southampton, 1976) p.289.

subsequently became a farmer of the ulnage and that was Thomas Smale who held the farm between 1415 and 1422.

Of the 69 people who paid on 10 to 19 cloths, 17, a quarter, held public office in Winchester. Three of the group served as mayor, namely John Bailey,⁶⁴ Richard Clevele,⁶⁵ and Robert at Roke.⁶⁶ The latter two were also MPs for the City. This group seems to contain people who took public office partly for the income that it generated, rather than for less direct advantage. For example, John Tyes was cathedral organist,⁶⁷ John Barbour was agent of the Archdeacon of Winchester,⁶⁸ Nicholas was the bailiff of Prior's Barton,⁶⁹ John Bailey was custodian of the gate and keeper of the postern,⁷⁰ and John Cran was town clerk⁷¹. This is apart from a selection of aldermen, collectors and bailiffs. John Bempthe was Warden of the Fullers' Guild. None of this group became ulnager.

Finally there are the 223 people who paid for less than 10 cloths of whom 23 men held public office at some time or another. The group included some leading citizens who were either at the beginning or end of their careers. For example, Hugh Cran had served as sheriff of Hampshire in 1382 and had custody of St Denys's Priory in Southampton. He had been constable and mayor of the staple, MP, mayor of Winchester, and ulnager in 1390. He was at the end of his life and died in 1401⁷². Cran was not the only erstwhile sheriff of Hampshire to be in this group of small taxpayers. Thomas Warner was another, as well as being Bailiff of the Soke.⁷³ John Arnold was another Bailiff of the Soke, who paid on only two cloths. He was also Summoner-general of the Diocese. Sir William Sturmy whose role as an ulnager was referred to in chapter 4 paid tax for five cloths in Winchester.

At the other extreme of his life from Hugh Cran, was John Veel who was later to hold a variety of civic offices including bagman, chamberlain, supervisor of work near St Elizabeth's college, bailiff, collector and mayor, but not MP⁷⁴. He farmed the ulnage between 1422 and 1432. Cran

⁶⁴ WS ii p.1157.

⁶⁵ WS ii p.1195.

⁶⁶ WS ii p.1334.

⁶⁷ WS ii p.1372.

⁶⁸ WS ii p.1154.

⁶⁹ He may have been Nicholas Gilbert.

⁷⁰ WS ii p.1157.

⁷¹ WS ii p.1207

⁷² WS ii pp.1148-9

⁷³ WS ii p.1378.

⁷⁴ WS ii p.1375

was the only MP in this group also served as mayor. Conversely, there were mayors who did not become MP such as Thomas Sutton⁷¹ and John Vecl. Most of the men in this group held fewer, and more modest, offices than the men in the upper groups. For example John Bullok, was warden of North gate bridge, and attorney of Hyde Abbey⁷² and Peter Gillynham's only office was sergeant of the City court.⁷³

As is to be expected, the men who were in a position to present many cloths to the ulnagers were often leaders of Winchester society, filling many public offices and obviously being powerful in the city's government. Those who did not live in the City were as likely to play leading roles in County affairs, in the administration of the Soke or the County itself. However, the opposite was not necessarily true. The leading men of Winchester were not necessarily dealing in cloth, as was shown by the presence of several very powerful men in the group who presented only one or two cloths. This may reflect the fact that they were at stages of life when their commercial activity was not at its peak and they were not then dealing in large numbers of cloths. Hugh Cran, at the end of his life, or John Vecl, at the beginning of his career, were obvious examples.

Women

Twenty nine women paid ulnage as revealed in these records from Winchester. There is a general scarcity of information about these women, so it is not possible to analyse their occupations, their marital status or anything else. Only a general description is possible. However the number of cloths that they had ulnaged is set out in the Table 5-7 below and the contribution made by women is compared with the overall figures.

⁷¹ WS ii p.1361.

⁷² WS ii p.1178.

⁷³ WS ii p.1243

Number Of Cloths Each	All Taxpayers	No Of Women Taxpayers	No Of Cloths
>95	17	0	
76-95	0	0	0
70-75	3	1	74½
60-69	4	0	
50-59	8	0	
40-49	11	0	
30-39	24	1	36
25-29	8	1	26
20-24.5	25	3	61
15-19	28	0	
10-14.5	41	3	34
5-9	53	3	19
½-4½	170	17	32½
Total	392	29	283

Table 5-7 Number of Cloths Ulnaged by Women compared with All Taxpayers

One woman, Alice Bromley, was responsible for 74½ cloths. This is more than she could have manufactured herself, and shows that she must have been financing production by others. (She was eighteenth in the overall ranking of numbers of cloths presented to the ulnagers.) All that is known about her is that she owned a garden in Chesil Street⁷⁴ and a croft at Bar End.⁷⁵ There is no mention of Alicia Wygge in the records, who paid tax on 36 cloths. There were a number of other Wygges in Winchester at the same time as Alice; for example, William Wygge paid tax on 140 cloths. Lucy Fry (26 cloths) was the widow of Richard Fry. She died in 1404, or thereabouts, and was subsequently described as a citizen of Winchester, thus being recognised as a woman of substance within the City. She certainly held several properties in Winchester.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ WS ii Item 1052, p.1080.

⁷⁵ WCM 1278, pp.1033-4.

⁷⁶ WS ii p.1238.

There were three women who were responsible for 20 or 21 cloths each. They were Matilda Lavington, Matilda Boleworth and Alice Panter. Matilda, or Maud, Lavington was the wife and then widow of Richard Lavington.⁷⁷ Richard Lavington probably died in or soon after 1395, for he only presented 4 half cloths to be ulnaged, while his brother, Thomas, was the largest presenter of cloths on the Winchester list. The family owned lands in Hampshire outside Winchester, and Matilda inherited various of these from her husband. Richard's daughter, Isabella, presented half a cloth for ulnaging in 1394.⁷⁸ It is tempting to think that this had been commissioned for domestic use, and being surplus was to be sold, at which point ulnage would be due. There was no other reason why a Miss Lavington would put such a small amount of cloth onto the market. There is no information about Matilda Boleworth or Alice Panter.

The three women who presented between ten and fifteen cloths were Matilda Clerk, Isabel Tyderle, and Alice Redhead, and none of whom ^{was} ~~were~~ mentioned in the records. The three women who submitted six or seven cloths apiece to the ulnagers were Joan Draper, Joan Froyle and Rosa Woderone. The only one about whom there are any details is Joan Draper, who was the widow of Richard Draper. She died in 1406 by which time she was married to Thomas Lavington.⁷⁹ Her presentation of seven cloths to the ulnagers was not the action of a poor weaver's widow carrying on her late husband's business, for she inherited a good deal of property from Richard Draper, so it was more likely the action of a business woman investing in cloth.

Of the 20 women who presented fewer than ten cloths, only one can be definitely found in the records. Alice Horner was the wife, and then the widow of William Horner.⁸⁰ Their daughter, Alice, married Thomas Lang, and the Winchester Survey attributes the cloths presented by Alice Horner to Alice Lang.⁸¹ The basis for this attribution is not apparent, since Alice Horner was alive and economically active until about 1419. There are also two possible further identifications of women in this group. Margaret Glover might be the Margery Glover who had a tenement in the High Street and was possibly the widow of Henry Glover who died in 1397,

⁷⁷ WS ii p.1282.

⁷⁸ WS ii p.1282.

⁷⁹ WS ii p.1217.

⁸⁰ WS ii p.1265.

⁸¹ WS ii p.1265.

but it is by no means certain.⁸² Similarly Christina Tonneswasse might have been a relation of Robert Tunwasher who lived in a tenement in Kingsgate Street, but the only link is the unusual surname.⁸³

Thus, of the 29 women ulnage payers of Winchester, it is only possible to identify six definitely and two possibly, and most of these identifications are by marital status and reference to their husbands. The records show that women were economically active in Winchester, even if not playing much part in the government of the City. There is no way of knowing how much payment of ulnage by married women was attributed to their husbands. The investigation of the women taxpayers cannot influence the conclusions that can be drawn about the men who presented cloths to the ulnagers because the information is too sparse.

Discussion

Having examined the lists of taxpayers and ascertained details of their lives from other sources, it is possible to draw some conclusions about the people who were paying the ulnage in Winchester. From the evidence of involvement in the cloth trade, as revealed by the ulnage records from the years around 1400, it would appear that weavers as a group were not the wealthiest of the cloth producers. Although this was apparently true of Winchester, it was not universally true. For example, Carus-Wilson has said of Salisbury that the weavers' guild was wealthier than that of the fullers.⁸⁴

The ulnage records show men who fit Dyer's description of merchants.⁸⁵ He states that they "are emphasised because their trade on a large scale, over long distances, often involving highly valued commodities like wool or cloth, gave them high profits". He pointed out that these wealthy merchants also derived income through their holdings of public office, their legal practice, and their rents. Certainly, the successful men shown up in the ulnage records of Winchester were behaving in that way, and can be considered typical of their class. In particular they consolidated their position as the governing group in the town by holding such offices as mayor, and serving the town as MP. It was noticeable that there was a tendency for the people who presented the most cloths to have held more public offices, and more important ones. It

⁸² WS ii p.1244.

⁸³ WS ii Item 860, p.1008.

⁸⁴ E.M. Carus-Wilson, "The Woollen Industry before 1550", *Victoria County History Wiltshire* 4 p.126.

⁸⁵ Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1990) p.24.

also seems that these powerful men were not working at their trades, unless they described themselves as merchants, but were occupying strategic positions in the supply of essential materials such as dyestuffs, and were handling the wholesale marketing of cloths. Dyer estimated that the merchant class was only found in about 30 of the larger towns. Winchester is a clear example of one such town and a study of its cloth taxpayers shows the effect of this merchant class. He also pointed out that below this “mercantile elite were the master craftsmen who in turn employed journeymen and unskilled labourers as servants”. Some men who fit this description are evident in the Winchester ulnage records.

Dyer's picture of mercantile activity has been amplified by Hatcher who compared merchant tanners with merchants in the clothing industry.⁸⁶ He wrote about them that “they were involved in each stage of the production and distribution of their product: they owned tin works and smelting plants, they dealt widely in tin, financed large numbers of tanners”. This is a picture which is comparable with the behaviour of the merchants in Winchester in respect of the cloth trade. The parallels are even closer because Hatcher said of the merchants who financed the tin trade that it “was for these merchants frequently only a part of their economic activities, and many engaged in internal and overseas trade in a wide range of commodities and speculated in real estate”. This is certainly a reasonable comparison with the activities of the larger Hampshire merchants. He then said of the smaller towns with populations between about 500 and 2000 that “there was no real mercantile element, and leading offices were taken by traders in foodstuffs, the wealthier craftsmen and the retailers”.⁸⁷ This conclusion is also supported by the evidence from Hampshire.

Unfortunately, meaningful information is not available about the women, so the conclusions primarily relate to men. In the period from 1394 to 1403, many of the ulnage payers of Winchester were involved in the production of cloth, but that other people invested their surplus income in the industry, whereas today they would buy stocks and shares or save through a building society. The study has also shown that, of the cloth producers, weavers were the least likely to have a spread of financial interests and fullers the most likely, with dyers occupying the middle ground. This was likely to have rendered the weavers more vulnerable to economic recession than either of the other two groups. The investment in cloth and its production helps to explain the mechanics of financing the trade. When cloth sales were buoyant, finance would

⁸⁶ John Hatcher, *English Tin Production and Trade before 1550* (Oxford, 1973) p.52.

⁸⁷ R.H. Hilton, ‘Lords, burgesses and hucksters’ *Past and Present* 97 (1982) 3-15.

have been drawn in from other interests, but when sales were dropping, surplus capital was diverted elsewhere. Conversely, a lack of investment capital may have restricted the production of cloth and held back expansion at times when the market could have absorbed increased supply. The comparison with tanners made by Hatcher⁸⁸ is valid in that many people who presented cloths for ulnager were not themselves working cloth producers, and many cloth producers, even of woollens, never presented cloths to the ulnagers. Pelham observed that in Warwickshire, many of the people presenting cloths to the ulnagers in the 1390s and immediately after were not cloth workers.⁸⁹ He concluded that those presenting small numbers of cloths were part-time producers. This conclusion may be valid in some cases, but the amount of skill involved is such that it is just as likely that some people who presented small numbers of cloths had been funding cloth production by others. He suggested that "those credited with large amounts ... may well represent an early generation of the 'clothier' class that was to play such an important role in the industry during the Tudor period". That certainly appears to be true of Winchester.

This still leaves open the question of how the market coped with differing demands on labour, but the evidence from Winchester suggests that dyers and fullers in particular were able and willing to turn their hands to other trades when need or opportunity arose and thus there was a degree of self-regulation of supply and demand. Hatcher found that in the case of the tin miners, that they were not all full time workers, but they combined tinning with other occupations, and

much of the labour force of the stannaries was made up of migratory workers who spent part of the year farming their own land or working as casual labourers in agriculture, fishing, building or elsewhere. Even full-time tanners usually kept a few animals on land close to their tin work, and many cultivated crops as well. Furthermore a large part of the labour force was made up of women and children.⁹⁰

It has not been possible to establish how true this was of the Hampshire cloth work-force, but it seems likely that similar forces were at work.

⁸⁸ John Hatcher, *English Tin Production and Trade before 1550* (Oxford, 1973) p.67.

⁸⁹ R.A. Pelham, "The Cloth Markets of Warwickshire during the later Middle Ages" *Birmingham Archaeological Society Transactions* LXI:7 (1950) p.131-141.

⁹⁰ John Hatcher, *English Tin Production and Trade before 1550* (Oxford, 1973) pp.47.

The County Taxpayers

There were ulnage payers elsewhere in Hampshire than Winchester. However it has proved very difficult to find biographical details of the taxpayers in the County. It has only been possible to find the occupations of 17 of these people, none of whom ^{were} based in the Isle of Wight. Of the 17 whose occupations have been identified, 12 worked in the clothing industry and 7 of those 12 were fullers. Thus the balance would appear to be different from that in Winchester, but the sample is too small to draw useful conclusions. It would be useful to see whether the same pattern is found on the Isle of Wight as on the mainland. The figures are much less good for the County, and extremely disappointing for the Isle of Wight. The figures set out in Appendix 15 include a column to show how many people can be identified for each place in each return. There is some duplication of names where people were named in more than one place. Unfortunately, none of the women named in the County ulnage returns has been traced. The lack of plentiful records makes comparisons much harder than was the case in Winchester, but some observations can be made nonetheless. It should also be borne in mind that there were no large payers of ulnage outside Winchester, and even the largest County payers only ranked with the middling payers to be found in the City. What the figures do not reveal is how much of the cloth ulnaged in Winchester had been produced outside the liberty. The figures are slightly distorted by the fact that the return for 1401-2 only gave totals for towns and not for individuals, but the numbers of cloths were so small that they do not affect the overall conclusions.

It is obvious from the ulnage returns that Winchester was far and away the centre of the Hampshire cloth industry, at least so far as the expensive cloths which were the subject of ulnage were concerned. One feature that is noteworthy is that there was a division between those towns making cloths of assise and other centres making dozens or kerseys. Thus Alresford, Alton, Havant were submitting full sized cloths, as were most of the cloths submitted in Southampton, while Romsey and the Isle of Wight were making dozens or kerseys. Andover was split and submitting both, but such cloth as was made in Basingstoke was taxed at Andover and this may affect the apparent split in Andover's business. The predominant returns were for cloths of assise, but this may not mean that cloths of assise were being produced, only that the returns were submitted in taxation units rather than by reference to the pieces of cloth actually presented.

It is not possible to make the detailed examination of the County ulnage payers that was made of those in Winchester because the information about them is not available. It has only been possible to identify the activities of 17 of the 185 County payers. The 17 comprised seven fullers, three tailors, two town officials and five others including a tanner and a clerk. The town officials were obviously leading members of their communities. William Anne (1 cloth) was Bailiff of Basingstoke in 1410,⁹¹ and Thomas Brangwayne (20 cloths) was reeve of Romsey in 1390.⁹² As might be expected the largest number of identifiable office holders are to be found in Southampton, because, in part, at least, that is where the records are. Six stewards are identifiable, John Deryng (1½ cloths), Henry Holeway (1½ cloths), William Overey (3 cloths), Richard Pafford (1 cloth), Walter Reigate (3 cloths) and William Wygant (1 cloth).⁹³ Of these six, two also held the office of mayor as did William Ravenstone (5 cloths).⁹⁴

There is a lack of information for the Isle of Wight which is particularly frustrating, because it would have been so interesting to study the financing of the production of kerseys which was so widespread there. Only one person's occupation was given, and that was written on the ulnage return, presumably to distinguish him from another of the same name. He was John Cole, cooper. There were 99 people who paid ulnage on the Isle of Wight in these five returns. However kerseys were the only taxable cloth produced on the Island and these were charged at half the price of a cloth of assize. The figures suggest that men were paying on the product of their own labours as they were mostly paying on twelve cloths or less on any given return. The only significant exceptions were Thomas Webb who paid on 40 kerseys and William Wiltshire who paid on 60 kerseys, both in 1394-5.

Summary and Conclusions

The study of the ulnage payers of Hampshire around 1400 showed a number of parallels with tin production. There was substantial outside finance in tinning, and part-time working. It seems likely that much the same was true in the cloth towns of medieval Hampshire. It is probable that women members of the household were involved in the production processes. Their involvement could have come about in one of two ways. Either they were drawn in when

⁹¹ WCM 4190, p.185

⁹² WCM 16035, p.746.

⁹³ H.W. Gidden ed., *Stewards Books of Southampton from 1428, 1* (Southampton, 1935) p.vii.

⁹⁴ J.M. Kaye, *Cantuary of God's House, Southampton, I, II*, (Southampton, 1976) p.5.

trade was poor, because they were cheaper to employ than hired hands or they were drawn in when trade was booming and every pair of hands available was needed. If the latter were the case, then they would have been part of a pool of labour which could be drawn on in times of need, and discarded when trade was slack, without their involvement showing in the records of the time.

During the years under review, there was a downturn in cloth production in both Winchester and the County. Whether this downturn arose from a lack of inward investment or a lack of demand cannot be answered from internal County evidence. Nationally, the exports of cloth were tending to rise, albeit gently. Therefore, a reduction in broadcloth production does not seem to have been caused by a national downturn in demand, and local factors must be considered. It is acknowledged that Winchester was in trouble, with rents tumbling and much property in a decayed state by the middle of the 1450s, but the ulnage figures suggest that the economic problems of the City were older, by far, than the mid-fifteenth century.

The downturn in production leads to speculation about the impetus behind the cloth industry. One of the factors that has not been resolved, is what were the mechanics which came into play as the industry expanded and contracted? If workers were laid off, or masters became idle, when demand contracted, what were the financial levers that enabled an upswing to take place? Weavers, dyers or fullers who had had little or no work for some months or more would not be in a position to finance the production of whole cloths of assise. Thread would have to be bought, the loom warped up and then many hours spent weaving by two people, who would need the means of livelihood the while. Additional finance would then be needed for the fulling, dyeing and finishing processes. The 4½d subsidy and ulnage fee, and probably other quality control fees would be needed, and then a purchaser would have to be found. If, however, production was financed, at least in part, by the savings of other tradesmen, this would ease the problem of financing expansion, and perhaps level amounts of production.

What is apparent is that part of the spare wealth of Winchester at the end of the fourteenth century was being invested by its owners in expensive cloths of which the production was a staple industry of the area. The same fact has been noted in Gloucester where Holt observed of the ulnage return for 1397 that

the 134 people recorded as selling these (350) cloths seem not to have been primarily occupied as cloth merchants, being recorded elsewhere as, for instance, brewers, bakers,

dyers or even, in some cases, weavers. The merchants who were important figures in the industry appear only as minor cloth sellers.⁹⁵

This drawing in of capital from outside the industry, has also been noted in the financing of the tin industry.⁹⁶ Hatcher has observed that “large amounts of capital were needed to keep the industry working smoothly, capital which ... the tanners were unable to provide for themselves”. He found that this led to high levels of indebtedness amongst the tanners, which led to the ruin of some of them, and he observed that

The demand for capital stemmed from the heavy investment and high risks involved in the extraction of tin, but regulations governing the sale of tin exacerbated what was an already difficult state of affairs

The production of cloths similarly required heavy investment, but there were not the same physical risks as would be found in tin mining. It is not apparent that there was a high degree of indebtedness amongst the cloth producers of fifteenth century, for the Winchester Survey⁹⁷ does not list debts in any significant number. One of the difficulties faced by the tanners was that they could only pay coinage duty at Michaelmas and Midsummer and only in two towns. This puts into context Winchester’s objection to the potential appointment of a remote ulnager because part of their case was that “many injuries and vexations have unjustly befallen the said lieges, to their no small loss and grievance, and that yet greater losses are like to befall them hereafter unless a speedy remedy be applied by the king”.⁹⁸

The detailed examination of the records of Hampshire for the years between 1394 and 1403 does not lead the reader instinctively towards an assumption of fraudulent returns. The records obviously relate to real people and the amounts of cloth which they presented to the ulnagers were too varied to be the product of a lazy clerk’s imagination. Thus it seems reasonable to regard them as generally reliable. Once that is accepted, then they can be studied to see what they reveal about the mechanics of the industry in that decade. The most significant feature to emerge is that it was not only weavers and fullers who presented cloths to the ulnagers. Since cloths had to be ulnaged before they could be sold, this opens up the fact that the industry was dependent on outside capital and was not a self-contained entity.

⁹⁵ Richard Holt, “Gloucester in the century after the Black Death” in *The Medieval Town 1200-1500*, Richard Holt and Gervase Rosser ed., (London, 1990) p.148.

⁹⁶ John Hatcher, *English Tin Production and Trade before 1550* (Oxford, 1973) pp.49-51.

⁹⁷ D. Keene, *Survey of Medieval Winchester*, (*Winchester Studies* 2), (Oxford, 1985)

⁹⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls XI-III, 1437-1445*, p.230 25 January 1442.

Chapter 6 The Later Hampshire Ulnage Payers

Introduction

The later Particular records of the 1460s and 1470s were submitted by the approvers who were appointed by Edward IV and who administered the ulnage in Hampshire between 1464 and 1478. Parliament had decreed that ulnagers were to submit detailed records showing who had paid the charges, and on what cloths.¹ No returns have survived for Hampshire from the years 1464-6. The Hampshire returns for 1466/7 were detailed as Parliament had decreed, but the later returns were no more than summaries, with most of the names omitted. Hampshire, including Winchester, has what appears to be a full return for the year 1466/7 with 214 people named.² This return will be considered first and then the other returns examined as a group. It appears to be as valid as the returns from the 1390s; it is the others from this period which are suspect.

The Return of 1466/7

The first few lines of the particular return relating to Winchester, taken from the return of 1466/7, are summarised below in Table 6-1 and they show a degree of detail which was unlikely to be fictitious.

¹ *Stat. Realm*, 2, p.405 4, Edw IV cap.1.

² E 101/344/17 m 18.

Thomas Felde	56½ cloths ³
John Salmon fuller	69½ cloths
John Kent	18 cloths
John Lovell	67 cloths
Roger Wilde	31 cloths
Thomas Loder junior	64 cloths, 1 kersey
John Calley	19½ cloths
Thomas Gyan	20 cloths, 8 kerseys
Laurence Byrte	8½ cloths
John Hone	8 cloths
Thomas Madhurst ¹	4 cloths
William Flocche	9½ cloths
John Komessh	8 cloths, 1 kersey
William Sylvester	36 kerseys
William Colvile	10 cloths

Source: E 101/344/17 m18

Table 6-1 Ulnage Return For Hampshire, Sample of Winchester Taxpayers, 1466/7

Because the returns for 1466/7 were detailed, it seems reasonable to use them as a reference point. The 214 people named on the roll paid a total of £30 11s 4¼d in subsidy and ulnage fees. This compares with the farm of £33 6s 8d that had been in force since 1442 and which was the highest rate of farm paid for Hampshire. There is evidence to suggest that it had become unrealistically high because there were difficulties in finding men willing to take the farm at that price.⁴

Location of Industry

The return of 1466/7 was detailed enough to show how much revenue came from each town; so it is possible to compare the figures with those of 1394-5 although the time spans are not the

³ Cloth is rendered 'pannus' in the original document.

⁴ In 1442, the farm was taken jointly by 3 men, at least 2 of whom had connections with the government of Winchester. The last of them ceased to hold office in 1461, after which the farm was held by the mayor and commonalty of Winchester, i.e. jointly by 12 men, for the next two years.

same. Those for 1394-5 covered sixteen months and that for 1466/7 covered twelve months. The figures are compared in Appendix 18 and the changes in production levels are apparent. The most startling fact about this chart was the drop in income of the ulnage between 1394 and 1466. The income from Hampshire, including Winchester, dropped by £27 5s 2½d and that of Winchester alone by £31 12s 4½d. Thus the loss in income from Winchester was off-set by a small rise in that from the rest of the county. Nonetheless, the overall income was down from an annual rate of nearly £58 to between £30 and £31. Winchester's annual rate of income dropped from £44 to between £12 and £13, a catastrophic change.

Winchester was not the only cloth town where broadcloth production dropped significantly in the fifteenth century. Bridbury had noted a similar drop in Salisbury which was not compensated for by an increase elsewhere in the County, but he observed this phenomenon at the end of the fourteenth century.⁵ Many previously successful towns had difficulties in the fifteenth century and Winchester was one such. Christopher Dyer also observed that "Especially in the fifteenth century, many larger towns went into decline, suffering a loss of population, a shrinkage of the built-up area and a diminution in commerce and industry".⁶ A drop in production can be seen in the ulnage figures for York, although they were not quite as severe as those for Winchester. York paid ulnage at an annual rate of £52 7s 10d in the period from July 1394 to September 1395 and at an annual rate of £21 9s 0d in the years 1471-73. This was partly compensated for because there was an increase in production elsewhere in Yorkshire. The East Riding had paid ulnage at an annual rate of £17 13s 6d in 1394-5 and this had increased to £45 7s 6d by 1466/7. Thus, in Yorkshire, loss of production in York was substantially replaced by an increase of production elsewhere in the County. This was not true in Hampshire where the loss of production in Winchester was not matched by any significant increase of production elsewhere.⁷

Although there was no increase of production in Hampshire to compensate fully for the reduction in Winchester, there was a small net increase of production in the County which went a little way to off-setting the decline. There was also some relocation of industry and the ulnage

⁵ AR Bridbury, *Medieval English Clothmaking* (London, 1982) p.73. He wondered if cloth were being diverted to Westminster for ulnaging, but the farm of Middlesex was always trivial, never exceeding £1 10s 0d, and the farm of ulnage of London dropped from £33 6s 8d in 1399 to £24 in 1403, so it seems unlikely that Salisbury or Wiltshire cloths were paying ulnage in the London area, quite apart from the fact that it was illegal to remove untaxed cloths from the county of production.

⁶ Christopher Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1990) p.188.

⁷ The Yorkshire figures are taken from John Lister, "The Early Yorkshire Woollen Trade" *Yorkshire Archaeological Society*, LXIV (1924).

returns allow this movement of centres of production to be followed. The two towns of the south-east, Farcham and Havant appear to have stopped production of taxable cloth altogether in these 60 years. On the other hand it would seem that there was a small amount of production elsewhere in east Hampshire, based loosely on Alton. This resulted in extra revenue, which more or less compensated for the loss of income from Farcham. Production in the north of the County, Andover, Basingstoke, Whitchurch and Odiham had nearly trebled. On the Isle of Wight the production level had declined by about one-fifth, but relatively the Island trade had held up better than had that of Winchester. Clearly the men of the Isle of Wight had found a fairly steady market for their produce and a stable way of financing their production. Southampton's level of production had declined, while Romsey's had increased by a third. It is possible that Southampton lost trade to Romsey. Southampton suffered from a lack of fresh water, and cloth finishing was water-intensive. Romsey is criss-crossed by myriad streams⁸, and thus could cope with both fulling and dyeing. There is evidence that the men of Romsey were finishing cloths for the Italian trade, so clearly the town contained workshops capable of undertaking high quality work.⁹ The few kerseys produced on the fringes of the New Forest may have been the tip of a generally low grade cloth industry where most of the cloths produced were not of the quality that rendered them liable to ulnage and subsidy. Production of all cloths had apparently ceased in Alresford by 1466.

The other change, which was conspicuous, lay in the types of cloth being produced. In 1394, if the returns are to be believed, most of the revenue was derived from cloths of assise, with dozens woven in some places. In 1466/7 everywhere except Romsey had diversified. Romsey, against the trend, was apparently only paying ulnage on cloths of assise, whereas in 1394, ulnage was only paid on dozens. In 1466, a mixture of types of cloth was being presented to the ulnagers in most cloth towns in the County. These types included kerseys which were taxed at the rate of three to a cloth of assise, whereas formerly they had been taxed at the rate of two to a cloth of assise, which may indicate that their size had changed. Straits, which had not been found in the earlier particular returns, were taxed at the rate of four to the cloth of assise. Southampton alone produced straits. Dozens were taxed, as formerly, at the rate of two to a cloth of assise. Thus not only had the volume of production changed, but also the types of

⁸ Hence its sobriquet "Romsey in the mud".

⁹ The accounts of Southampton Town 1449-50 cited in P. Berrow *When the Nims Ruled Romsey* (Romsey, 1978). The men of Romsey had marched to Southampton to protest because they considered that the Italians were not paying them sufficient for their labours.

cloth, reflecting changing fashions.¹⁰ By the later fifteenth century, the very rich had moved away from heavy woollen cloths and were making use of cloths based on silk. Therefore there may have been a drop in the demand for the large cloths of assise. Lesser people would buy cloths of the same quality, but in smaller amounts, and hence there would be a market for smaller woollen cloths.

Number of Taxpayers

In 1466/7, not only was the revenue from ulnage less, but the number of people paying it had dropped noticeably. In the return of 1466/7, 214 taxpayers were listed. Of these, 88 came from Winchester and 126 from the rest of the County. In 1394-5, about 398 people were listed on the two returns, of whom 168 were from Winchester, and about 230 in the County. The comparative numbers from the different towns in the County are tabulated in ~~19~~ Appendix 18.

A drop in the number of people paying a tax may be because wealth has become concentrated in fewer, but richer, hands. This was not the case in fifteenth-century Hampshire. Fewer people paid the ulnage, but on average, they were paying fractionally more money per head in the later period at an average of 2s 10¹/₄d compared with the earlier 2s 9d. To achieve such similar figures when the large payers were no longer to be found, means that the average payments by the lesser payers must have increased. Both very large and most of the very small presenters of cloth were no longer to be found. This mirrors the situation found in the stannaries, where the very large and powerful merchants of the early fourteenth century had "by the close of the fourteenth century ... been replaced by a larger body of less powerful merchants" who each presented less tin.¹¹ The difference is that the concentration and subsequent diffusion of wealth took place much earlier in the tin-mining industry than in woollen cloth production. This may be because the woollen cloth production had developed as a substantial industry rather later than Cornish tin-mining.

The very large entrepreneurs found at the turn of the century had gone by 1466. In the sixteen months of 1394-5, there were eleven people in Winchester who paid ulnage for 50 or more broadcloths. In the twelve months of 1466/7 there were four who paid on more than 50 cloths. These four men were John Salmon a fuller (69¹/₂), John Lovell (67), Thomas Loder junior (64¹/₂)

¹⁰ A cloth of assise needed two people to weave it. Such cloths were so wide that the weavers threw the shuttle from one to the other. I think a kersey could be woven by one person, which would make its production much easier to organise.

¹¹ John Hatcher, *English Tin Production and Trade before 1550* (Oxford, 1973) p.69.

and Thomas Field (56½). The next largest number of cloths presented by one person was 31. Whether Winchester's decline as a cloth centre came about because there were fewer financiers investing in the trade, or whether the decline in trade meant that the City could support fewer merchants cannot be determined from these figures alone. It is likely that a destructive downward spiral developed.

The Taxpayers of 1466/7

It is possible to identify the occupations of some 29 of the 214 people named on the return, from the whole list. Because of the small number of people involved, the people of Winchester and the County have not been dealt with separately, as was appropriate for the earlier returns. The identifiable primary occupations were as follows in Table 6-2 below:

Trade Sector	Occupation	Number In Class
Clothing	Draper	1
Clothing	Fuller	10 ¹²
Clothing	Glover	1
Clothing	Tailor	2
Clothing	Weaver	1
Clothing	Woolwinder and wool merchant	1
	TOTAL	15
Food	Brewer	1
Food	Butcher	1
Food	Cook	1
Food	Tapster	1
	TOTAL	4
Other	Carter	5
Other	Chandler	1
Other	Goldsmith	1
Other	Merchant	2
Other	Tanner	1
	TOTAL	10

Table 6-2 Occupations identified in the ulnage payers of 1466/7

Too much reliance should not be placed on the exact nature of these figures since they relate to no more than 14% of the names on the list. However, there are some general points which are worth making. The most obvious of these is that in this list there were no builders, whereas there had been sufficient builders around 1400 to put them into a class of their own. At both times just over half the taxpayers who could be identified were clothworkers.

¹² This figure includes Alice Parker who was a fuller's widow.

The 1466/7 names contain one identifiable weaver, but no men who were primarily described as dyers. The weaver was Thomas Stepilton who was Steward of the Weavers in Winchester in 1477/8.¹³ Even so he only submitted 3½ cloths of assise and 10 kerseys, which suggests that he wove them himself or was closely related with their production. One third of the whole list was comprised of fullers, so they obviously continued to have money for investment and to be dominant in the trade. The general absence of dyers is unexpected. In the earlier returns there were twice as many dyers as weavers. This absence of dyers from the list may be a chance of the survival of the records, but it may represent either a decline in the amount of dyeing or a decline in the financial standing of dyers. The Brokage records of Southampton show that various cloth taxpayers were dealing in dyestuffs, woad, madder, and alum especially, so dyeing had not ceased in Hampshire for all that dyers were not prominent in the ulnage returns. Another possibility is that the two trades of fulling and dyeing may have become merged and the term “fuller” was used as a generic heading.

Two men were described primarily as merchants. One of them was Stephen Bramden of Winchester. He was variously described as a dyer, fuller and a brewer. His wide financial interests included renting a corner tenement in Winchester High Street which was sometimes known as “the Dyehouse”. He was also a Yeoman of the Crown,¹⁴ and at various times held office in Winchester including serving as mayor and as MP. He held various land and property in Hampshire and Winchester. These holdings included the George Inn in Winchester which he held for about ten years.¹⁵ The other identifiable merchant was Lewis Aynes,¹⁶ who was one of the Italian merchant community in Southampton. He only submitted one cloth and three kerseys to the ulnager. At various times he served as bailiff, sheriff and mayor of Southampton.¹⁷ In 1485 he was one of the Southampton officials involved in carting Venetian goods to London,¹⁸ and was a ship-owner in his own right.¹⁹ He dealt in dyestuffs amongst other commodities,²⁰ but was clearly a merchant and not a dyer “in disguise”.

¹³ WS ii p.1358.

¹⁴ WCM 1336, p.1046.

¹⁵ WS ii p.1172.

¹⁶ The Italian form of his name was Lodowico Agnys. H.W. Gidden ed., *The Book of Remembrance of Southampton, II 1303-1518*, (Southampton, 1928) p.58.

¹⁷ H.W. Gidden ed., *The Book of Remembrance of Southampton, I, 1440-1620* (Southampton, 1927) p.72.

¹⁸ H.W. Gidden ed., *The Book of Remembrance of Southampton, III, 1483-1563* (Southampton, 1930) p.58.

¹⁹ H.W. Gidden ed., *The Book of Remembrance of Southampton, II, 1303-1518*, (Southampton, 1928) p.80.

²⁰ T.E. Olding ed., *The Brokage Books of Southampton for 1477-8 and 1527-8*, (Southampton, 1985) passim.

The rise of carters as a group was apparently a new feature of the ulnage records. This may be an illusion arising from the fact that the brokage records are available for the later period and therefore carriers are easier to identify than was formerly the case. Carters would need working capital to pay for their horses, carts and men, and probably on occasion had sufficient reserves to be able to trade on their own account; thus some of them were undoubtedly in a position to finance cloth production. Three of the carters whose names were on the ulnage return of 1466/7 were based in Southampton. They were William Reed (3 kerseys presented in Fawley), Richard Taylour (1 kersey), and John Gryme (1 cloth, 9 kerseys). Two of the carters were Winchester men, John Jamys (1 kersey) and John Oliver (6 cloths and 14 kerseys).²¹ The numbers of cloths they presented are consistent with men taking advantage of an occasional investment opportunity, not of men heavily involved in the business.

The fact that, in both the earlier and the later figures, 53% of the taxpayers were in the clothing trade, means that nearly half the taxpayers were not primarily in the clothing trade: they were dealing in high grade cloths as investments which shows that there was still money to be made from such investments. Dealing in cloth was part of the commercial enterprise of the tradesmen of Hampshire throughout the late fourteenth and much of the fifteenth centuries. The cloth trade continued to be dependent on capital both from within the industry and without. The Table 6-3 below shows the trade sectors of the people who financed cloths submitted to the ulnagers.

	1394-1403	1466/7
<i>Number of men</i>	139	30
Trade Group	Whole Sample	Whole Sample
	%	%
Building	5	0
Clothing	53	53
Food	23	13
Other	19	33

Table 6-3 Comparison Of Trades Of Ulnage Payers 1394-5 And 1466/7

²¹ There is some doubt about John Oliver as the only record of him is as carter to Hyde Abbey in 1443-4. Olive Coleman, ed., *The Brokage Book of Southampton 1443-44* (Southampton, 1960) *passim*.

However, there was a difference between the occupations of the Winchester and non-Winchester people. Nine non-Winchester people had identifiable occupations. There were three carters and a merchant from Southampton who have already been mentioned.²² If these nine people are taken from the list of 30 identifiable taxpayers, it leaves 21 from Winchester. Of the 21, 13 were in the clothing trade group, which is rather more than half the sample. The numbers are small, but they suggest that the cloth industry in Winchester was not managing to draw in capital from as wide a base as it had in earlier times. It seems that within Winchester itself, either cloth had become a less attractive investment to those outside the cloth industry or there was proportionately less money available for investment from people in other trades. It is conspicuous that it is in the County, where the trade had not declined, that the cloth trade was attracting varied finance in larger proportions than in Winchester, where the trade was in difficulties.

The overall decline in the commercial health of Winchester was revealed in another way. In the earlier period it was common to find men who obviously moved from trade to trade and were finding wide scope for their entrepreneurial skills. This was not apparent in the 1466/7 lists in which only three people had multiple occupations. Stephen Bramden (24 cloths) has already been described. However his breadth of interests was unique in the 1466/7 list. The other people claiming multiple occupations were John Bramley and John Chalcroft. John Bramley (6 cloths) was a cook, an innkeeper and a tapster. In 1469 he rented Le Sterre, a substantial inn in Winchester High Street, on a repairing lease.²³ John Chalcroft was a tailor, mercer, grocer and haberdasher, which latter three occupations were grouped together in Winchester for guild purposes. He was steward of the three trades between 1466 and 1468, and was steward of the tailors from 1481 to 1485. In 1477, he was dealing in woad, lead and haddock.²⁴

²² The five men with identifiable occupations were Thomas Draper of the Isle of Wight (30 kerseys) who was a fuller. John Basyng was a draper from Andover who paid on 10 cloths and 30 kerseys and finally there were three Romsey men, John Lytell tailor (6 cloths), Richard Nobble tanner (4 cloths) and Richard Walkelyn, butcher (22 cloths).

²³ WS ii p.1172.

²⁴ WS ii p.1187.

T.E. Olding ed., *The Brokage Books of Southampton for 1477-8 and 1527-8* (Southampton, 1985) pp.6, 114.

The Returns 1467 to 1476

Finally, it is necessary to consider the returns submitted by the Approvers between 1467 and 1476. It was returns of the type arising from this period which Carus-Wilson considered to be fraudulent, and hence made her strictures which brought about the condemnation of the whole class of records. Of the records of which provided the focus of her argument, Hampshire has fewer Particular returns for this period than has Gloucester,. Returns were not submitted separately for each county during this period, but the details for each county were listed separately, and only the Hampshire items are discussed below.

John Farley submitted a return for 1467-9, but separated the details for the two years 1467/8 and 1468/9. The returns for the year 1469/70 appear to be missing. There are surviving Particulars for the years 1470/1 and 1471/2 in separate returns. No Particular returns have survived for the years 1472-4, although a return for the year 1472/3 was enrolled. Richard More was appointed approver in 1474, and he submitted a return covering the years 1474-6 and another 1476-8, so altogether there are six Particular accounts with lists of names.

The returns from this period were presented in a different way from those of 1466/7. There was much less detail in the later returns, and instead of 214 names the number of named individuals never exceeded 48. The actual number of names varied between periods as is shown in Table 6.4 below:

Period	Number of names	Approver
1467/8	18	John Farley
1468/9	22	John Farley
1469/70	not available	John Farley
1470/1	29	John Farley
1471/2	31	John Farley
1472-4	not available	John Farley
1474-6	48	Richard More
1476-8	48	Richard More

Table 6-4 Numbers of Names on the Ulnage Returns 1467-1478

The other factor which is noticeable, was the lack of continuity in the names across these six returns. Carus-Wilson found that Richard More repeated the names from return to return, although he rotated the numbers of cloths. The Hampshire names mostly fell into one of three groups. Sixteen of the 18 names which occurred in 1467/8, were repeated in 1468/9, but only two names from these two years are found on later returns. There was also a close pairing of names from 1474-6 and 1476-8, in that 44 of the names occur on both lists. No names went across all six lists, and no names from the first two years, were found in the last two lists. The returns of 1470/1 and 1471/2 differed from each other substantially, as well as differing from the first and last two. Detailed lists of names are shown in the Appendix 20.

Carus-Wilson pointed out that the lists of names were inadequate. They were not complete and she herself drew attention to the number of entries that were marked "et aliis". On the Hampshire return of 1467/8 there were 18 taxpayers named. Four of these were names that had occurred on the previous year's return and are therefore unlikely to be inventions.²⁵ In addition, four of these names are to be found in contemporary records.²⁶ Bearing in mind that published records for the Isle of Wight, Alton, Basingstoke and Andover are few and far between, this is a reasonable rate of identification and suggests that the names are based in fact, even if we are not sure what they represent.

The other ways in which these returns differ from those of 1466/7, apart from the complete absence of women's names, is that most of the figures were for whole cloths and there were no records of any very small numbers of cloths. The smallest recorded payment was for six cloths of assise. When it is remembered that the median number of cloths on the 1466/7 return was just over three, it is obvious that these returns were being compiled differently. If the return of 1466/7 did not exist, it would be possible to argue that there had been a major re-organisation in the industry and all the small producers had been swept away by those with more capital. However the detail on that return belies this hypothesis, for such a radical change could not have happened between one year and the next.

It is therefore necessary to seek an alternative explanation. Carus-Wilson concluded that the returns were fraudulent. In order to establish fraud, there has to be an intention to deceive. She

²⁵ They were John Cornish, Maurice Tailor, John Calley, all of Winchester and Richard Ward of Romsey.

²⁶ They were Thomas Clerk junior, John Somer, and William Bolle who were mentioned in connection with Winchester and John Mill who had connections with Basingstoke and Wallop.

cited the law of 1464²⁷ in which it was stated that detailed returns were to be submitted to the Exchequer showing the names of everyone who paid the tax. The return of 1466/7 clearly met this requirement. The fact that the subsequent ones did not, and that the change occurred not only in Hampshire but in other counties as well, suggests that the Exchequer officials indicated that they would accept returns in an abbreviated form. The returns were audited in the Exchequer and the clerks would have reacted if unacceptable returns were being submitted. There was too much consistency in the style of returns for it to be credible that they were not dictating the format. It is as if they decided that they did not want long lengths of names showing payment on every kersey or strait. They were constrained by the will of Parliament to require lists of names, and the consolidated lists showed apparent compliance with the law. If fraud was being practised, it cannot be proven from these returns. They are unsatisfactory for later use, and clearly they did not show the names of all the taxpayers, but they do not necessarily show theft of the revenue from the Hampshire ulnage.

This still leaves the question of how the lists were compiled. They were probably based on fact, as making up lists of names and balancing them with the figures would be unnecessarily tedious. The returns from Yorkshire show one or two names from each place followed by some such phrase as "and others". It is likely that the Hampshire returns were compiled in a similar way. The first four returns contained particulars for both Gloucestershire and Hampshire, although the names were listed separately for each county. Two names, Richard Warmester and Richard Ward appeared on both lists in 1468/9, albeit for different numbers of cloths. Both names were on the Hampshire list only for 1467/8, and Robert Warmester was on the Hampshire list of 1470/1. There is the possibility that this duplication of names is clerical error, or there may have been a coincidence of names. The other possibility is that the two men were dealing in cloths in both counties.

Of the 127 different names on this later group of returns, it is possible to identify 44 of them, or to make some statement about them, with a reasonable degree of certainty. In addition, seven of the men named on the 1466/7 list were found on the later lists, so there is some degree of continuity there too. From this, it is reasonable to infer that the names relate to those of real people, even if not to the actual number of cloths they presented for payment. Because of the nature of the source material, the available information mostly relates either to property holdings or trading activities. It is not therefore possible to determine the civic offices held by more than

²⁷ *Stat. Realm ii*, 4 Edw IV cap.1 pp.403-6

a few of these people, nor their occupations. The lists included the names of two men who were certainly mayors, John Hamond of Winchester and John Walker of Southampton. Hamond was one of the two joint ulnagers for Hampshire and Winchester in 1466/7. Walker made an abortive attempt to become farmer of the ulnage in Southampton in 1483.

There were one or two lesser officials mentioned. Thomas Clerk was bailiff of Winchester,²⁸ and John Cornish, a draper was an alderman of the City.²⁹ William Hamond was bailiff of Wickham.³⁰ Compared with the rich lists of the 1390s, this is poor stuff. Some of the names on the list belong to people who lived outside Winchester or Southampton. Thomas Asche came from Overton,³¹ and William Bery lived in Whitchurch.³² John Smith, a tailor from Alton, sent 1½ packs of kerseys to Southampton, and incidents such as these give evidence of Alton's continued involvement with the cloth trade. Three men can be identified in the ulnage returns as being based on the Isle of Wight.

The number of occupations that can be identified is so small that no conclusions can safely be drawn from the list. The most interesting fact is that dyers are identifiable, unlike the position in 1466/7. Robert Gale of "Ramsay" and Thomas Gard were both described as dyers in the ulnage return. Robert Warmester was described on the return of 1470/1 as a "weaver" and Thomas Clerk junior as a fuller. There were other clothing tradesmen represented. For example, Richard Wattes and John Cornish³³ were drapers who lived in Winchester. John Coteler was a tailor,³⁴ as was John Smith of Alton.³⁵ In addition it seems that John Dyer, William Dyer and John Smith were either merchants or dyers.³⁶ Also, it is probable that one or two people were primarily carters, such William Hyde.³⁷

²⁸ WS ii p.1194.

²⁹ WS ii p.1202. Cornish was also known as Henry Putte.

³⁰ WCM 10439, p.418.

³¹ E.A. Lewis ed., *The Southampton Port and Brokage Books 1448-9* (Southampton, 1993) p.191.

³² T.E. Olding ed., *The Brokage Books of Southampton for 1477-8 and 1527-8* (Southampton, 1985) pp.69,70,81.

³³ WS ii Item 74, p.503.

³⁴ WS ii pp.1203-4.

³⁵ T.E. Olding ed., *The Brokage Books of Southampton for 1477-8 and 1527-8* (Southampton, 1985) p.32.

³⁶ T.E. Olding ed., *The Brokage Books of Southampton for 1477-8 and 1527-8* (Southampton, 1985) passim.

³⁷ T.E. Olding ed., *The Brokage Books of Southampton for 1477-8 and 1527-8* (Southampton, 1985) pp.39,44,49.

Thus it can be established that the names appearing on the approvers' returns were those of real contemporary people who were undoubtedly presenting cloths for payment. It is also clear that the returns do not list all the people who were presenting cloths, nor do they reflect accurately the numbers of cloths presented by those people who were named. How then were they compiled? The Yorkshire returns for the same period are illuminating. They relate to individual towns, list one or two names and then add "and others". It is likely that the Hampshire returns were compiled in the same way. Without sight of the original records, one cannot ascertain how the names were selected. It may have been the first two or three names of the list, or a name was selected when a certain number of cloths had been accounted for. There is probably a geographical split, in that all the Alton cloths are attributed to an Alton man, and so on.³⁸

A sufficient number of the names on the later ulnage returns can be identified to show that the returns were not wholly works of fiction even if they did not show the names of all the taxpayers, with the exception of the return of 1466/7. There is no reason to think that the names recorded on the later returns were selected other than randomly, so they cannot even be used to identify the larger taxpayers. Thus the names after 1466/7 are useless for making any balanced statement about the industry in the decade to 1478. Nonetheless, the names seem to be real and can be used to give an impression, of some of the men who were dealing in broadcloths in Hampshire in those years.

Summary and Conclusions

The records from the 1460s and 1470s lack the richness of those of the 1390s. This is partly because some of them were abbreviated and partly because the trade was less vibrant than it had been in the earlier years. It is the records from this period that have particularly been condemned as fraudulent and one of the objects of this work has been to re-examine that charge.

The first feature of the particular records for Hampshire compiled in the 1460s and 1470s was that they fell into two distinct types. The return of 1466/7 was in the same form as the returns that have survived from the earlier period. It is full of detail and minutiae which a fraudster

³⁸ The other possibility is that individuals subcontracted for the tax on so many cloths and acted as sub-ulnagers or as agents, arranging for the tax to be paid. There is nothing to suggest that this was so, but it is a possibility, in the same way as modern shipping agents arrange for importers' goods to be presented to customs and for the various charges to be calculated and paid. It may be that one day, some record will come to light which will help to unravel this problem.

would be unlikely to invent. It has names of contemporary people, and the mix of their activities is not inconsistent with the mix found from the earlier returns. Thus there is no reason to believe that this return was dishonestly compiled.

However, the returns from the period 1467 to 1478 were of a different type. The number of names has been much reduced and the individual towns of Hampshire in which the ulnage was paid were no longer mentioned. There is no reason to think that the men named in these returns did not pay ulnage. Conversely, there is no reason to think that they paid the amounts of ulnage attributed to them. Indeed, the contemporary returns from other counties, such as Yorkshire, state that the lists of names were incomplete. The number of cloths which have been ulnaged have been grouped together, or consolidated, and attributed to a few of the ulnage payers. How their names were selected is not apparent. The result is that we have a short list and not one from which we can draw any useful conclusions about the ulnage payers, but not a list that is a work of fiction. It was probably based on fact, but not on all the facts. The result is disappointing and severely restricts the usefulness of the records, but they do not provide the basis for damning the whole class of records.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

The purpose of this work has been to examine the surviving records relating to England's first excise duty, and to seek to establish their value in the study of economic and social history in the fifteenth century. The subsidy on woollen cloth was granted as compensation to Edward III for the income from the sale of cloths that his ulnagers were seizing on the grounds of non-conformity with statute measure. At the same time, his ulnagers were granted the right to charge a fee for their services in measuring such cloths, and the two functions were joined together. Cloth measure was a continuing matter of concern to those with an interest in the cloth trade throughout the latter half of the fourteenth century, the fifteenth century and beyond, but has not been a major theme of this work.

When considering the ulnage records, a general caveat about their usefulness should not be overlooked. Although these records are a valuable source for the study of the cloth trade in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it is necessary to remember that the subsidy only applied to heavy woollen cloths, and any study based on the ulnage is necessarily skewed by an unknown amount. The subsidy did not apply to the cheaper grades of woollen cloth nor to cloth made of other fabrics; neither did it apply to worsted-spun cloths made of wool: it related only to a segment of the market. Nonetheless, the woollen-cloth industry was of such major importance in medieval England, that the ulnage records as a source cannot be ignored despite their inherent limitations.

This work has examined the ulnage records between 1394 and 1485 because they are the fullest set of records and derive from a time when England's woollen cloth trade was vibrant. The study was undertaken despite the criticisms of the ulnage records made by Eleanor Carus-Wilson; her views have been addressed where relevant. Carus-Wilson's criticisms concerned the later Particular accounts, compiled in the years from the mid-1460s to 1478, although her findings have been popularly generalised to condemn all the ulnage records as fraudulent. The ulnage records are more extensive than Particular returns from the 1460s and 1470s; this study set out to examine all types of ulnage records, and not merely one part. The Ulnage Rolls and their associated documents were examined. These were already recognised as ulnage documents and have been examined, at least in part, by a number of people. Further research revealed that other records relating to the administration of the ulnage had also survived, and these were to be

found variously in the Fine Rolls, the Patent Rolls and the Close Rolls. Hardly anyone has used these sources in connection with the ulnage, and, as has been explained in the preceding chapters, their study has revealed much about the administration of the ulnage in fifteenth-century England.

Attention has been drawn to the few published transcriptions of ulnage records, of which there are but a few Particular returns and no extracts from the Ulnage Rolls. The publications that have made significant advances in the study of the ulnage records have been discussed. This discussion drew attention to the work undertaken by others in interpreting and using the records, as did Carus-Wilson herself on occasion. Those who have searched and used the ulnage records have generally found them to be of use. No one else, who has undertaken primary research, has produced such sweeping condemnation as did Carus-Wilson, although her words have caused subsequent writers to issue cautions about the later Particular returns. This study has shown that, apart from the abbreviated Particular returns of the 1460s and 1470s, the ulnage records have a place as a useful source for the study of fifteenth-century economic history of England, and a number of aspects have been considered in this work.

Carus-Wilson's Criticisms

Eleanor Carus-Wilson set out her objections to the ulnage records in a powerful article entitled "The Aulnage Accounts: A Criticism".¹ In her opening she drew attention to the fact that the ulnage accounts were being used as a source by her contemporaries, but warned that many of the ulnagers' statements 'prove to be as barren of information as were the conventional medieval "proofs of age"'. She was working primarily on West country returns that have survived from the mid-1460s to 1478 as these are a more or less complete set of returns. She had rejected the Particular accounts from the beginning of the century on the grounds that kerseys were excluded and on the grounds that they were a less complete series of records. On the second point, the Hampshire records bear out her criticism; the early Particular returns have not all survived. Her other criticism, drawing attention to the absence of kerseys, is not valid in the case of Hampshire; kerseys were mentioned by name in the returns from 1394 onwards.

¹ E.M. Carus-Wilson, "The Aulnage Accounts: A Criticism", reprinted in E.M. Carus-Wilson, *Medieval Merchant Venturers*, (London, 1967) pp.279-291. The original article was printed in *Econ. H.R.* 2nd Ser. 1, (1929).

While the facts of the records castigated by her are not generally in dispute, alternative interpretations have been offered for some of them. She based her observations on one section of the records, and these were considered in chapter 6, where the later Particular returns were discussed. Those returns have to be seen in their context, and must not be allowed to serve as the basis for damning the whole body of records. With the exception of Carus-Wilson, all the authors mentioned had found some of the Particular returns to be useful, although those writing after 1929 were careful to differentiate between the Particular records written around 1400, and those compiled around 1470. No authority regards the authenticity of the earlier records as suspect, while there are grave doubts about some of the latter.

Carus-Wilson had examined the figures from a series of returns for the period 1467 to 1478, and pointed out that for some of the returns relating to West country counties “the number of cloths is more than once repeated and that the last two sets of figures, for two years and one and a half years, are contrived by a very simple calculation”. When the Hampshire returns were examined, they were not obviously flawed in this way. There may be a repeated return for the years 1469/70 and 1470/71. It is difficult to tell whether there were two returns, or whether there were two copies of one return, and none for the other year.² Apart from this doubtful case, the returns from Hampshire are all different. They contain different names and amounts of cloth. However, the total of the final return, which only covered eighteen months, unlike the previous return for two years, was, as Carus-Wilson said, apparently calculated by finding three-quarters of the previous total, and names and numbers of cloths were undoubtedly made to fit the required total. Thus the returns are not reliable as indicators of the state of the cloth trade, and her strictures about the inadequacies of these returns are borne out. As she said, “their evidence as to progress or decline in the cloth industry is far from convincing”. The comparison of these returns with the farms that immediately followed them suggests that the approvers were not accounting for all the cloths, or were not collecting all the money that they should have been. We can wonder whether the approvers, most notably Richard More, were systematically defrauding the Exchequer, or whether they were operating a *de facto* system of farming, in which they accounted for an agreed number of cloths, or whether both practices were at work.

² E 101/346/25 and E 101/347/3 exist as two separate membranes and one of them is in a poor condition; so it is not possible to decide which years they relate to. The names and payments are identical, so they probably are two copies of the return for 1470/71. However, this means that there is no surviving return for the year 1469/70.

Carus-Wilson next turned her attention to the lists of names, which she described as “a fortuitous concourse of names and numbers recurring at random”. She supports this by showing how the names on the Wiltshire returns were “re-cycled” across a series of accounts. The names on the Hampshire returns for the period have been tabulated,³ and the same phenomenon is not generally observed, nor is the repeated pattern of numbers of cloths, although there is no reason to think that the numbers of cloths attributed to specific names bears any relation to the truth. Carus-Wilson was critical of the way in which only one or two names were listed from each district within the county. It is clear that the names were not the names of all the taxpayers; in some of the returns this was made apparent with phrases such as ‘et aliis’ being appended; thus there was no attempt to deceive by such a presentation, albeit that it is not what Parliament required. It is clearly not possible to use the names that are provided on these returns in any useful study of the ulnage. Carus-Wilson’s further criticisms of the inadequacies of the names, while correct, therefore become irrelevant, because the lists of names are useless.

These later Particular accounts, which can be said to be ‘consolidated’, have therefore largely to be discounted in any study of the ulnage. It is a pity, because they appear to have great promise. However, the fact that this group of returns is largely useless, does not negate all the rest of the ulnage records, from which much can be learned, and not only about the medieval cloth trade. It is also true that not all the returns from the 1460s were of the truncated, useless variety. A few were compiled in the same way as those of the 1390s, with many names and much detail; they may therefore be assumed to bear a much closer approximation to the truth.⁴

The National Records

The original sources comprise the two Ulnage Rolls and their associated Particular returns, which have not been calendared. In addition, the Patent Rolls, the Fine Rolls and the Close Rolls were found to contain much that was of use. These latter sources have been very little used in the study of the ulnage, and it has been shown that they add significantly to an understanding of the administration of the ulnage. A simple comparison was made between the information in the Ulnage Rolls and that in the Fine Rolls, sufficient to establish that they were

³ See Appendix 20.

⁴ It is only by examining the individual Particular returns that useful returns can be identified.

consistent with each other and therefore they re-inforce each other, rather than conflicting. This helps to underpin the case that the records were based in fact and were not 'works of art'.

Despite the difficulties of the fifteenth century, such as international war, a major recession and changes of monarch as a result of civil war, the administration largely kept going. A good deal of work went into the administration of the ulnager by the Exchequer, and the records that have survived serve as a case study of the late medieval civil service at work.⁵ There were problems, but the records indicate that, generally, ulnagers or farmers were appointed when needed, and not many errors were made in the technical side of the appointments. The farmers and ulnagers were not necessarily appointed on terms most favourable to the crown, but that may be a judgement made with the benefit of hindsight. Furthermore, the Exchequer imposed sufficient discipline that the returns seem to have been received reasonably promptly. It is likely that the Exchequer gave directions about the form of returns: the switch from detailed returns in the mid-1460s to the abbreviated ones that followed was so commonly made, that it can only have come about in an orchestrated fashion.

The Exchequer not only received the returns from the ulnagers but audited them as well. The names of the auditors were written on many of the returns and were noted on the Ulnager Roll. The same names appear over many years, so the auditors undoubtedly understood the returns with which they were dealing. The civil servants managed to discipline the ulnagers into a fair degree of regular behaviour, which is a tribute to their continuing centralised authority and somewhat at variance with the animadversions that have been cast by Steel and others on the fifteenth-century Exchequer. Even the fact that no records are apparent for Hampshire between 1405 and 1422, except for a couple of records of seized cloth, does not mean that no revenue was collected. It simply suggests that returns were not required. The Exchequer clerks clearly exercised control over the men appointed to collect the money. Despite the lapse in the Hampshire records, the Exchequer officials normally insisted on, and received, returns, and in the format they had decreed. They audited the returns, and checked the money against the accounts that were submitted. For all its imperfections, and despite the difficulties of a very disturbed century, the ulnager was collected and remitted to the Exchequer. The required records were kept, and have largely survived to tell their story.

⁵ This area of study was wholly unexpected by myself when I embarked on this work.

Occasionally, the administration was helped along by the Exchequer clerks themselves becoming involved in the ulnage. They were most likely to become mainpernors, although on a few occasions one or other of them would contract to farm the ulnage. There were other occasions when mainprise was “found in the Exchequer”, which suggests there were difficulties in finding people to guarantee the farmers. The fact that they were appointed on such terms, suggests that the Exchequer considered it important to continue to find men to undertake the work.

Not only were the returns audited, but there must have been some form of monitoring of appointments and of receipt of returns, although the mechanics are not apparent. Occasional duplicate appointments were made, but usually only when the Exchequer was likely to have been under heavy pressure because of political crises. There are some instances when no appointments can be discerned, but it seems unlikely that no provision was made to collect the tax; evidence in support of this hypothesis has been produced.

During the 90 years under review, the administration changed from directly-employed ulnagers, to farmers and then to approvers, and finally reverted to farmers. The initial change to farmers occurred in 1403 and the system had certain advantages in that the returns needed less auditing than detailed Particular accounts. Provided that the farm fees were submitted as agreed, the farmers could keep such records as they saw fit without external interference. If the farm was too high, no one would take it; if too low, there would be competitive bidding. One drawback of farming was that it would not be quickly sensitive to an increase in income, and the surplus would therefore be collected by the farmer and not made available to the Crown. It is likely that Edward IV and his advisors based their ideas of the profitability of the ulnage on the high figures current around 1450 and thought that farm fees were too low: hence the change to administration by directly-employed approvers. The low level of income received from the approvers was probably not wholly the result of their culpability; it is likely that the industry was going through a difficult period for at least some of their period in office.

Edward IV brought in two experiments at once. He extended to the ulnage his system of controlling the royal estates through a system of managers, and he experimented with regional administration. It is possible, but by no means certain, that one or other experiment might have succeeded, but the two parts of the experiment did not support each other and together they failed. It was probably too early in England's history to attempt regional administration as a

basis for tax collection when there was little or no existing provision for such a structure. Not surprisingly, it did not work well, partly because of the difficulty in setting up relatively stable groups of counties and hence establishing any firm framework.

Examination of the Patent Rolls and the Close Rolls revealed how the ulnage income was used. It was medieval practice for kings, when making grants, to attach the payments to specific sources of income. Thus it is possible to see where much of the revenue from the ulnage went. The primary recipients of the income were members of the king's household staff, above menial status but lowlier than noble courtiers. These were the men who rate footnotes, at best, in studies of medieval kings, but when the expenditure of the ulnage is considered they achieve a prominence that they otherwise lack; and so it is possible to look at a very specific group of royal attendants and to focus attention on their rewards. Thus the ulnage records cast light on fifteenth-century "royal housekeeping". Most of it went towards the expenses of maintaining the court with suitable pomp. The men who were paid from the ulnage were the upper servants - those with whom the king had personal contact, such as his yeomen of the body - men who were essential to the running of the royal household but who were not the great officers of state. These men were socially on a par with many of the ulnagers, and some of them farmed the ulnage, so again the study has revealed more of this social group.⁶

In considering the ulnagers, attention was first paid to the question of who was likely to become an ulnager or farmer of the ulnage. In the earlier records, it was obvious that many of the ulnagers were leading men in the communities for which they held office. The office appealed to substantial merchants or tradesmen in provincial towns, or the minor gentry in the counties. These groups became less well represented as time went on, and increasingly the office holders came from London. It was not the merchants of London who took over the offices, but men associated with the court, whether they were minor gentry or merchants. The financial state of these courtiers is perhaps illustrated by the fact that they might be recipients of the ulnage income or they might farm it, but they do not seem to have felt able to give mainprise unlike the earlier county officials. The ulnage posts did not appeal to the first rank of merchants, nor to members of the baronial class, for whom the rewards were not large enough. Conversely they were unsuitable for minor tradesmen, who would not have the contacts or the finance to carry out the work. Over the time under review the emphasis shifted from local men taking office to

⁶ The grants made to the City of Winchester and to the monks of Hinton Charterhouse were anomalies and not typical of the way in which the ulnage income was used.

outsiders using it as an investment. By chance, the study of the ulnagers has provided an insight into the activities of a stratum of society not often observed. The ulnagers, and their mainpernors, were locally important tradesmen, minor officials of court, or less often, members of the civil service. The ulnagers were men of the social class of Justice Shallow, Falstaff's friend in Shakespeare's *Henry IV*, who were not wealthy enough to live as gentlemen, except by supplementing their incomes.

The actual work undertaken by the ulnagers and their staffs must be a matter of speculation, because there are no details in the records. The appointment of deputies was envisaged in the legislation, unlike that for customs officials, who were normally required to undertake the work themselves. However, the numbers and terms of appointments of these ulnagers' deputies were not stated. They were rarely mentioned and most commonly only in connection with the seizure of cloth.

The farmers, approvers and, occasionally, a directly-employed ulnager had to be underwritten by mainpernors. By studying the information available in the Fine Rolls about the ulnage officials and their mainpernors it is possible to develop a profile of the men who administered the ulnage in the counties. The aspirant farmers asked their friends or relatives to provide mainprise for them. This closeness was demonstrated when it was shown that individuals might be mainpernor on one occasion and ulnager on another. The occupations of the farmers and mainpernors have been examined and it was apparent that becoming ulnager was not the sole preserve of men already in the cloth trade. Being of suitable standing in the community seemed to be more important than being a cloth trader.

The average length of time served by an ulnager was less than four years. This average was made up of many short terms in office, especially in the 1390s, and some long spells, especially in the years between 1410 and 1440. Long-serving officials could not be established in the middle years of the century because the frequent changes of monarch meant widespread new appointments, and Edward IV's change to approvers meant that the farmers were nearly all replaced. Most ulnagers served singly, although there were some partnerships, especially in counties where once the major cloth producing town had had its own ulnage. Apart from this factor, there are no identifiable reasons that influenced men to take on the work singly or in groups. Most ulnagers administered one county, but a few were appointed to administer pairs of counties, or in East Anglia, larger groups. It was noticeable that, after the accession of Henry

IV, places that were uneconomic to administer were amalgamated with others to make more efficient units.

Farming was, of course, most successful when trade was buoyant and there was plenty of profit to be made; at other times there appear to have been difficulties in recruiting farmers. The relative profitability of the ulnage can be glimpsed by comparing the number of cloths for which ulnage was accounted and the number of cloths exported, although these comparisons can only be made in those years when the ulnage was farmed. Most noticeably, the 1440s stand out as a period when farming was worthwhile, certainly in the larger cloth-producing counties, for many more cloths were being exported than the number on which the Crown was receiving ulnage fees.

The high fees of the 1450s probably arose from profitable years in the 1440s which led various men to make large high bids for farms in the 1450s. The subsequent collapse in prices shows that these bids could not be sustained. During the 1420s, 1430s and 1440s some men stayed in office for many years and there was a general air of settled continuity. This was destroyed in the 1450s when aggressive bidding for farms led to an unsettled period especially in some counties. At the end of the 1450s the value of farms dropped substantially, and the change of monarch in 1460 brought in its train a host of new appointments, as did the brief restoration of 1470. In the 1460s Edward IV changed from farming the ulnage to appointing approvers to administer it. However, the scheme was unpopular and in 1478 he reverted to farming the revenue.

The ulnage was ever a minor tax, but it is the source of much information about the broadcloth industry. It produced a small amount of revenue, rarely more than £800 in a year and often far less. Nonetheless, by studying the farm fees it is possible to determine the main cloth centres of fifteenth-century England and to study, in broad terms, their rise and fall, both relatively and absolutely. When these figures are augmented by the records of payments by directly-employed ulnagers an even better profile can be obtained. The Hampshire records are detailed enough to map the onset of the decline of Winchester's trade, which was so catastrophic in the fifteenth century.

The records have enabled national trends in ulnage income to be established. Their study has also revealed the relative importance of the woollen-cloth industry in different parts of England. They make it possible to identify the centres of production and to gain an idea of the numbers

of cloths being produced. The variations in farm fees provide a coarse picture of the changes in production as the century progressed; which is better than that obtaining for any other branch of the cloth industry, although far from perfect. Therefore, the figures can be used to show the relative importance of different counties, both statically and dynamically, as well as giving an idea of the volume of cloths being produced.

The ulnage records have been used to identify the places where the main centres of the broadcloth industry could be found. It is clear that whereas most counties had some commercial broadcloth production, the main concentrations were in the West country, in Eastern England and in Yorkshire. Only seven counties paid ulnage farm fees above the national average, so these seven counties, together with the three counties that were just below the average, contained the majority of the industry. The grants of office of ulnager, or farmer, can also be used to show where individual towns were important within their counties so far as cloth production was concerned, and thus give a glimpse of the factors at work within counties. The fifteenth century saw the decline of several of the successful cloth towns of the fourteenth century, and there is some evidence of dispersal of production to smaller centres. The cloth trade was affected by the disputes with England's trading partners in the middle years of the century, but, despite that, the number of cloths exported remained above the levels achieved at the beginning of the century; and production was buoyant overall. The ulnage did not fully reflect the most productive years, because farming was not sensitive enough for the crown to take advantage of large increases in production.

It is easiest to follow the variations in ulnage income from the records granting farms, although they only tell part of the story. Some changes in farm income to the crown were due to alterations in the administration of the ulnage in individual counties as they moved between being farmed and being administered directly. Other fluctuations arose from differences in the size of farm fees of farm payable for individual counties. It has not been possible to identify the reasons for these changes, but plotting them enables the size and timing of shifts to be observed; and it must be left to local historians to find the detailed reasons for them. Similarly, ulnage farm fees give no hint of short term changes in the woollen-cloth industry. Nevertheless, farming must reflect, at least broadly, the volume of cloth being produced in any given area. It is thus reasonable to use these figures to determine which counties were responsible for the major amounts of woollen cloth and at what times.

Hampshire and its Taxpayers

Once the general framework had been established, it was worthwhile to examine the Hampshire records in detail. The figures for Hampshire have been the subject of close scrutiny, which revealed that the farm fees of the County followed the national trends and were unexceptional. However, once the Particular returns from the County were studied, a much more interesting picture emerged. These showed how pre-eminent Winchester was in the 1390s, when the ulnage income from the City was two, three or more times that from the rest of the County. By 1466, the income from Winchester was less than that of the rest of the County, which had not changed very much. The implications, for Winchester, of the collapse of the industry must have been appalling. The decline of Winchester in the fifteenth century has been recognised before, but these figures help to highlight its eclipse in a dramatic way.

It has been possible to identify many of the Winchester people in the first cluster of returns, and some of those from the County, although none from the Isle of Wight. It was apparent that only about half the people who could be identified were primarily cloth workers. It was quite obvious that many people were presenting to the ulnagers cloths that they could not have made themselves; nor were they likely to have processed them. Thus it became apparent that the cloth industry was drawing in capital from outside itself. The industry relied heavily on external financing, but in return offered investment opportunities to people with spare capital. In view of the length of time it would take to produce and finish a cloth, this need of finance by the producers is hardly surprising. Carus-Wilson used the presence of non-clothiers on the returns that she condemned as one piece of evidence that they were fraudulent.⁷ In view of the evidence of the Hampshire ulnage returns, this does not seem a valid argument. It would have been more surprising if all the names had been those of clothiers, not that some were engaged in other business. Her detailed critique of the validity of the names in most of the later Particular returns is undoubtedly justified, and those lists of names cannot be taken as meaningful in any way; but this specific criticism was not valid.

The City and County were ulnaged separately for the first ten years but once they were combined the ulnage in Hampshire was largely administered under the supervision of the authorities of the City of Winchester. Hampshire was unique in that the Corporation of

⁷ E.M. Carus-Wilson, "The Aulnage Accounts: A Criticism", reprinted in E.M. Carus-Wilson, *Medieval Merchant Venturers*, (London, 1967), p.285. She suggested that traders buying the cloth for export were not likely to have been organising its production.

Winchester kept a very tight hold on the administration of the ulnage locally, which does not seem to have been the case with any other corporation. This concern undoubtedly arose from the fact that the City was the chief beneficiary of the Hampshire ulnage revenues. The intervention of the City authorities undoubtedly had a stabilising effect on the administration of the ulnage in Hampshire, although they could not keep the arrangements running smoothly after 1460.

Most of the ulnagers were leading men of the City, and many mainpernors came from Hampshire. If the comments of the Winchester Corporation in 1442 were any guide, it would appear that most of the Hampshire ulnagers actively participated in the administration of the ulnage and therefore their presence was necessary for the smooth running of the operation. Locally-available ulnagers would have been more likely to ensure that the business of ulnage was done in a way that was satisfactory to those affected by it, especially if they lived amongst the taxpayers. Because Hampshire's ulnagers were local men, the County did not have external ulnagers; neither Exchequer officials, nor royal household servants, were farming this ulnage.

In summary, the difference between 1394 and 1466 was that much less tax was being collected. It came from fewer people, although the average payment per person remained very similar. The very large financiers had gone by the 1460s, and they had been replaced by a larger number of middle-sized dealers who were to be found in the County as well as in Winchester. Winchester had suffered an appalling collapse of trade. Southampton's trade was down by a third over its 1394 level but from a much lower starting point.

The ulnage return of 1466-7 showed a dramatic decline in the broadcloth industry in Hampshire, most especially in Winchester, although the ulnage records give no indication of movements in the levels of production of lesser cloths. The decline is clearly seen in Winchester where there the revenue fell from £58 18s 2d to £12 11s 2d. This was a drop of £46 7s 0d, more than the net drop for the County as a whole. The conventional wisdom is that the cloth trade left the towns and moved into the countryside. These figures show some evidence of that, but the increase in the County figures no way compensate for the contraction in those of Winchester. What we see here is an overall, and very large, drop in production and not a relocation of industry of any significance. Those citizens of Winchester, who in 1411 were petitioning to be allowed to produce cloth outside the City, were, in effect attempting to shore up an industry in decline, not merely trying to earn extra profit by finding cheaper labour.

The Taxpayers

There were two clusters of Particular returns in which the names of taxpayers were listed. The first cluster came from the decade following 1394. The second cluster came from the decade around 1470, of which only that for the year 1466/7 can be considered useful.

When the figures for Winchester around 1400 were examined, it was found that 4% of the taxpayers, 17 men, accounted for 30% of the payments.⁸ Each of these men accounted for 96 or more cloths in the four returns for which details are available. The occupations of 16 of these 17 men is known. As with the whole sample, half of them were associated with the clothing trade. This means that half of them were not primarily described by association with the clothing trade, and yet they were presenting some of the largest numbers of cloths in Winchester. This example re-enforces the statement that the taxpayers came from a wide commercial base. The larger taxpayers were not primarily working cloth producers, but merchants. The evidence points to the conclusion that the people who presented cloths to the ulnagers were dealing in cloth and not primarily producing it.

An examination was made of the records relating to fraud. Few cloths were seized, which is not surprising when the size of the subsidy is compared with the value of the cloth. Failure to pay was taking a very large risk relative to the amount that was levied. Furthermore, because taxed cloths were sealed, it was apparent to everyone if untaxed cloths came onto the market. When the ownership of seized cloth in Hampshire was examined, it was found that the forfeiting owners came from the same class of people who were paying the ulnage, and where contemporary records exist, their names also appear amongst the list of those who paid. Thus there was not an underclass of tax evaders; those who failed to pay were merely a subset of the regular group of taxpayers. There were elaborate procedures to ensure that a fair value was established for seized cloth, and these were described, and their existence show that the rule of law held some sway in the fifteenth century.

The duties of ulnagers have been analysed and discussed in the light of such evidence as is available. It was concluded that ulnagers probably visited those who needed to pay the tax,

⁸ The statement is confused by the fact that two of the names, John Newman and John Purys, are each known to belong to two men. It is not possible to be sure which cloths were the responsibility of which half of either pair. This clouds the detail but does not spoil the force of the argument.

rather than having the cloths brought to them. Because of this, and to avoid uneconomic travelling, they appointed deputies to deal with local needs in the main cloth towns of the County. The large number of ulnage and subsidy seals held in Hampshire has been highlighted, albeit without any satisfactory explanation, and the care that was taken of the seals has been discussed.

Conclusion

What has this study established? First, it has demonstrated that the records surviving from the years 1394 to 1485 contain plenty that is worthy of attention: also that the ulnage records generally have integrity, although they do not contain all the detail that the local historian would like to see. The absence of some Particular returns means that the ulnage records do not allow small or short-term variations in the woollen-cloth industry to be observed. However, the records do allow major trends to be studied and the fortunes of individual counties to be observed. There are, moreover, sufficient surviving records to allow a study of the taxpayers to be made. The records of cloths seized, although few, give an indication of the types of cloth available and their values, which again is information not easily available. The tax only applied to a select range of cloths; the records do not show what else was happening, such as the amount of cheap cloth production or anything about the worsted industry. The records have been used to study the cloth trade in England, and as a case study of tax administration in fifteenth-century England. Shortcomings in the records after 1467 have been identified, but the existence of some previously neglected records from the 1460s has been discovered.

It would be useful if the Ulnage Rolls could be calendared. There is much to learn from a full examination of the material, and this work has attempted to suggest a framework within which such an examination could be given a context.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 The Hampshire Ulnage Documents

The ulnage documents consist of two rolls, a number of particular accounts and various ancillary records. They are all to be found in the Public Record Office in the Exchequer documents.

Upon the two consecutive Ulnage Rolls¹ are enrolled the returns of the ulnagers for the whole of England for the entire period. They show who the ulnagers were, what moneys were due, and how they were accounted for.² They list any cloth that was seized, together with its worth, and usually say from whom it was seized. The enrolled items also contain a record of the seals used by the ulnagers because the Exchequer required that a record of their whereabouts was maintained. Each membrane is about six feet long and is written on both sides. At the foot of each membrane is a list of the entries to be found thereon. These tables of content are correct and therefore invaluable. The first roll, catalogued by the Public Record Office as E 358/8, contains thirteen membranes and covers the period from 1394 to about 1401. The second roll, E 358/9, has fifty-two membranes and covers the period from about 1401 to the accession of Henry VII in 1485. However, there are no enrolled items for Hampshire in the years between 1405 and 1415, or for the years between 1417 and 1422. The two rolls, which are written in Latin, have not been calendared.

The documents contain much material pertinent to the administration of the tax, but only the associated Particular returns contain lists of the people who had paid the tax. Thus they provide no opportunity to study the profiles of individual taxpayers over any meaningful time-span. For three quarters of the period under review, the tax was farmed and the farmers were therefore only required to submit their fees and the general returns, but not the details of who had paid what charges. Most of the Particular returns and ancillary documents which pertain to Hampshire and Winchester are to be found in the class range E 101/344/10 to E 101/344/17.³ These bundles contain some detailed returns showing who paid the ulnage, while other membranes contain only the items that were copied onto the rolls.

¹ E 358/8 and E 358/9.

² This might be by remission of the money due, by tally, or the money might have been paid to a designated recipient. Occasionally the money was shown as still be outstanding.

³ A full list of the documents searched is given at the end of this appendix.

The catalogue numbers are not a good guide to the details of the surviving records. Some bundles contain single returns such as E 101/344/10, which is the full return for Winchester for the period 1394-5, while others are collections of returns grouped together in no apparent order. Thus E 101/344/16 has 13 membranes from various years from Richard II to Edward IV, as does E 101/344/17, which has 21 membranes across the same time span. Even more confusing is the fact that some documents, which might have been expected to be together, have been catalogued separately. For example, the letters patent granted to Nicholas Tanner of Winchester on 2 May 1398 are catalogued under E 101/344/15. The return showing how he has performed his office is one of the documents in E 101/344/16, and the particular account showing the details of the taxpayers has been catalogued as E 101/344/12. Nonetheless, when all the anomalies and difficulties have been resolved, it can be seen that returns exist for the majority of the years between 1394 and 1485, apart from the years between 1403 and 1424, for which there are hardly any items.

Apart from the returns that are linked to the Ulnage Rolls, there are some earlier particular accounts and other documents relating to Hampshire. There are a few references to Hampshire in E 101/346/6 and E 101/346/7. These two bundles contain items which relate to the ulnage payments for imported cloth during the period 1333-5. The next document that is relevant is E 359/9 which has a few entries relating to Hampshire for the period 1353-8. That document is described in the PRO catalogue as a list of subsidy and forfeiture of cloths levied by sheriffs and others, and is part of the Chancellors Roll duplicate main series. None of these documents contain^s much that is relevant to Hampshire, but they appear to be all that has survived for that period. The 1360s have left two documents relating to the Hampshire ulnage. E 101/344/8 is the lease of ulnage to John of Mottisfont, granted in 1366, and written in French. E 101/687/3 is a similar lease also to John of Mottisfont and dated 1368.

There are also references to the Hampshire ulnage relating to the years after 1467 which are found in returns relating to groups of counties in the south and west of England, of which Hampshire was one. Returns that relate to Hampshire are found in E 101/346/22A, which contains the returns for Hampshire and Gloucestershire from 1467-9, and E 101/346/25, which contains returns for the same counties for 1468, but was probably some sort of draft from which E 101/346/22A was prepared. The details of returns relating to Hampshire for the years from 1471 are variously catalogued under E 101/347/3; E 101/347/7; and E 101/347/10 to E 101/347/13.

There are four documents, described in the PRO catalogue as containing details about the Hampshire ulnage, which failed to live up to expectation. With one exception, they relate to the period before 1394. The first of these four documents is E 101/622/3 of 13 Richard II which is catalogued as "Particulars of account of commissioner and inspector of sales of cloth". The catalogue lists Hampshire as one of the counties to which it relates, but, on examination, no information pertaining to the County was found. Secondly, there is E 101/622/4 which is catalogued as one file of subsidiary documents from Richard II to Henry VI but which contains nothing about Hampshire. Thirdly, the catalogue describes E 359/13 as "Subsidy and forfeiture of cloths levied by sheriff and others" from 32 Edward III to 18 Richard II, but the document could not be found by PRO staff. The final document is catalogued as E 101/667/9 and was dated as 1380/81. The PRO catalogue describes it as containing the "names of collectors and controllers of ulnage". It consists of four membranes and has Hampshire information as well as that from elsewhere. However, the Hampshire list has a heading describing it as a list of the administrators of the Poll Tax rather than of the ulnage.⁴ It contains a list of names, with the parts of the County for which the officials are to act, although Winchester is omitted. Since the phrases "collector" and "contra rotulores" are not found in documents associated with the ulnage, this list cannot be taken as relating to the ulnage.

⁴ The Hampshire list is headed "Nomina Collectorum et Contrarotularum subsidii anno quarto Regis Ricardi Secundi". Since the heading was contemporary, and the catalogue compiled some centuries later, this document is not regarded by me as an ulnage document and has, regretfully, been excluded from this study.

Date	Reference	PRO catalogue description	Notes
18 & 19 Ric II 1394-5	E 101/344/10	Particulars of accounts of ulnage Winchester 4ms	
18 & 19 Ric II 1394-5	E 101/344/11	Particulars of accounts of ulnage Southampton 2ms	
21 & 22 Ric II 1398-9	E 101/344/12	Particulars of accounts of ulnage Winchester 3ms	
21 & 22 Ric II 1398-9	E 101/344/13	Particulars of accounts of ulnage Southampton 3ms	
Temp Ric II	E 101/344/14	Particulars of accounts of ulnage Southampton 1m	
Ric II - Hen VI	E 101/344/15	Subsidiary documents 1 file	
Ric II- Edw IV	E 101/344/16	Accounts of ulnage Southampton 13 ms	global rendering of money from farms
Ric II - Edw IV	E 101/344/17	Particulars of account of ulnage Southampton 21ms	
40 Edw III 1366	E 101/344/8	lease of ulnage Southampton 1m	Lease to John of Mottisfont French
5 Hen IV 1417 1407	E 101/344/9	Acc of ulnage Southampton 1m	Faded account but with names and places.
16-17 Hen VI	E 101/346/19	Account of ulnage of various counties	
7-9 Edw IV	E 101/346/22A	Particulars of accounts of ulnage [Glos and Hants]	
9-10 Edw IV	E 101/346/25	Particulars of accounts of ulnage [Glos and Hants]	
7-8 Edw III	E 101/346/6	Account of ulnage of imported cloth	French
8-11 Edw III	E 101/346/7	Account of ulnage of imported cloth	French
14-16 Edw IV	E 101/347/10	Particulars of accounts of ulnage [various counties]	
16-18 Edw IV	E 101/347/11	Particulars of accounts of ulnage [various counties]	
22 Edw IV - 1 Ric III	E 101/347/12	Particulars of accounts of ulnage [various counties]	
22 Edw IV - 1 Ric III	E 101/347/13	Particulars of accounts of ulnage [various counties]	
10 Edw IV	E 101/347/3	Particulars of accounts of ulnage [Glos and Hants]	
11-12 Edw IV	E 101/347/7	Particulars of accounts of ulnage [Glos and Hants]	
Ric II	E 101/358/8	Ulnage accounts	Summary by county and major towns.
Ric II	E 101/358/9	Ulnage accounts 52m	Summary as above.
13 Ric II	E 101/622/3	Particulars of account of commissioner and inspector of sales of cloth in Hants and other counties 1m	cloth seized in Somerset and Bristol only
Ric II - Hen VI	E 101/622/4	Subsidiary documents 1 file	Not Hants
42 Edw III	E 101/667/9	Names of collectors and controllers of ulnage 4 mms	Poll Tax, not ulnage
42 Edw III	E 101/687/3	Indenture concerning lease of ulnage Hants 1m	French
32 Ed III to 18 Ric II	E 359/13	Subsidy and forfeiture of cloths levied by sheriff and others	Wrongly catalogued. Not found
31-32 Edw III	E 359/9	Subsidy and forfeiture of cloths levied by sheriff and others. Chancellors Roll dup main series	

Appendix 2 Comparison of Relative Importance of Cloth Producing Counties⁵

County	Gray 1350s	Gray 1390s	Merrick 1395-1485	Heaton 1460s	Average Rank
Somerset	5	1	1	2	1
Bristol	2	4	5	5	2
Yorkshire	7	3	4	3	3
Suffolk	9	6	3	1	4=
Wiltshire	11	2	2	4	4=
Hampshire	1	8	10	8	6
London and Middlesex	4	10	9	13	7=
Warwickshire	14	5	7	10	7=
Essex and Hertfordshire	18	7	6	6	9
Berkshire and Oxford	12	9	11	7	10
Kent	3	12	13	12	11
Norfolk and Norwich	13	0	8	14	12
Gloucester	8	17	16	9	13
Surrey and Sussex	10	18	12	16	14
Devon and Cornwall	19	11	17	11	15
Lincolnshire	6	13	21	20	16
<i>Dorset</i>		<i>15</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>17</i>
Northamptonshire and Rutland	15	19	18	15	18
Shropshire	17	14	15	23	19
Herefordshire	16	22	20	19	20
Worcestershire	21	21	19	18	21
Nottinghamshire	23	16	22	26	22
Northumberland	20	24	23	22	23
Cambridge and Huntingdonshire	22	20	27	25	24
Staffordshire	25	23	24	24	25
Bedford and Buckinghamshire	24	27	26	21	26
<i>Leicester</i>		<i>25</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Derby</i>		<i>29</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Middlesex</i>		<i>28</i>		<i>29</i>	<i>29</i>

⁵ Estimates were made for those counties where not all four works had placed them. These are indicated by italics.

Appendix 3 Ulnage Income from Hampshire 1394 to 1403 in £

	Start Date	End Date	Years	Months	Actual Payment	Yearly Rate of Payment	Monthly rate
					£ s d	£ s d	£ s d
Winchester	20/07/1394	24/11/1395	1	5	63 2 6	46 16 6	3 18 0
Winchester	24/11/1395	24/10/1397	1	11	61 2 0	31 18 0	2 13 4
Winchester	25/10/1397	16/05/1398	0	7	20 4 0	36 2 10	3 0 2
Winchester	02/05/1398	07/02/1399	0	9	20 17 8	27 2 6	2 5 2
Winchester	07/02/1399	17/10/1399	0	8	28 0 8	40 12 0	3 7 8
Winchester	21/11/1399	12/12/1400	1	1	38 5 8	36 4 0	3 0 6
Winchester	12/12/1400	05/02/1401	0	2	8 15 2	58 2 6	4 16 10
Winchester	05/02/1401	01/07/1401	0	5	15 1 10	37 14 8	3 2 10
Winchester	01/07/1401	03/10/1401	0	3	3 17 6	15 0 8	1 5 0
Winchester	03/10/1401	13/01/1402	0	3	5 4 10	18 15 0	1 11 2
Winchester	13/02/1402	29/09/1402	0	8	20 13 10	32 19 8	2 15 0
Winchester	29/09/1402	29/09/1403	1	0	32 11 6	32 11 6	2 14 2
Average						34 10 0	2 17 6
Hampshire	20/07/1394	24/11/1395	1	4	20 2 2	14 18 2	1 4 10
Hampshire	22/11/1395	07/05/1397	1	5	31 10 10	21 13 8	1 16 2
Hampshire	07/05/1397	07/04/1398	0	11	20 1 0	21 15 8	1 16 2
Hampshire	07/04/1398	01/05/1398	0	1	1 0 0	15 4 2	1 5 6
Hampshire	01/05/1398	01/05/1399	1	0	14 2 2	14 2 2	1 3 8
Hampshire	17/10/1399	26/01/1401	1	3	4 1 8	3 4 0	0 5 6
Hampshire	26/01/1401	14/11/1401	0	10	2 3 6	2 14 2	0 4 8
Hampshire	14/11/1401	12/11/1402	1	0	2 6 10	2 7 0	0 4 0
Hampshire	14/11/1402	12/11/1403	1	0	4 0 2	4 0 8	0 6 8
Average						11 2 2	0 18 8

Source Ulnage Roll E 358/9

Appendix 4 Payments Made From The 'Ulnage' Income Of Oxfordshire And Berkshire

Many of the grants of revenue received from the ulnage weres attributed to specific receipts. The grants of the income from the farm fees of Oxford and Berkshire are used to illustrate the difficulties of keeping track of revenue which is so specifically allocated.

The first mention, after 1394, of the income from the two counties occurs in December 1399, when Henry IV granted £10 annually to Robert Morle, his esquire, for life.⁶ In 1402, Ralph Pope, a yeoman of the king's chamber was granted 6d a day for life. This replaced another grant that he had been receiving. Pope was dead by 1417, and Henry V re-allocated his grant to John Broun, a servant in the King's chamber.

In 1422 three king's serjeants claimed a total of £19 2s 6d for services to Henry V through a grant made by the King but never executed. Their claim was honoured after his death and was to be paid from the income from the ulnage and subsidy of Oxford and Berkshire.⁷ This was a feasible grant because the farm for the two counties then stood at £23. In the following year, 1423, Robert Dauson, one of the three was appointed parker of the king's parks of Eltham and his grant of wages for that office was specifically stated to be additional to his share of the money already granted to him.⁸ In 1427 William Say, another of the three, but then described as yeoman of the crown, claimed 6d a day from the issues of the counties of Oxford and Berkshire, in addition to his share of the £19 2s 6d from the ulnage revenues, as did the third member of the triumvirate, Adam Penycoke.⁹ Thus by 1424, all three men were receiving payments additional to their share of the ulnage money. Therefore it was necessary to keep sets of records showing the allocation of the various funds from which they were paid, unless the whole system depended on the recipients pursuing payment themselves with little central oversight.

By 1437 Robert Dauson was stated to have been granted £9 11s 4d from the ulnage of Oxford and Berkshire.¹⁰ Since this was a half rather than a third of the original grant, the implications are that Penycoke had died, although he had been alive in 1427. In 1444, William Crosby, a

⁶ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen IV, 1399-1401, p.118 1399 Dec 1.

⁷ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1422-1429, p.43, 1422 Dec 16.

⁸ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1422-1429, p.109 1423 July 6.

⁹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1422-1429, p.410 1427 July 8. Note: This grant was from other revenue from those two counties, not from the ulnage and subsidy income.

¹⁰ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1436-1441, p.18 1437 Jan 12.

clerk of the signet, was granted £4 16s 8d from the ulnage of the two counties.¹¹ The farm stood at £24, so the revenue from the ulnage would have been no more than £2 13s 4d. By 1445 the inadequacies in the drafting of his original grant had become apparent and it was replaced by one that encompassed both subsidy and ulnage, and the sum increased slightly to £4 17s 6d.¹² He was also granted an attachment for his arrears, which shows that he had not been paid.¹³ In 1452 William Say and Robert Dauson claimed arrears of £19 2s 6d per annum from November 1449.¹⁴ Thus the total grant of the revenues from the combined counties was £24. From 1428, the farm had been £24 or more, so the grants were realistic.

In February 1471 the revenues from Oxford and Berkshire, then farmed at £30, together with a charge of £30 on Somerset and Dorset, were granted to John Plummer, knight and keeper of the great wardrobe.¹⁵ Since both the farm and the grant were arranged during the brief restoration of Henry VI, it is unlikely that either took effect. In 1472 the revenues were paid to Maurice Kedwelly, who, amongst his other duties, was Surveyor of the king's castles.¹⁶ In 1474 there was another re-organisation and the income was paid to John Elryngton, treasurer of the royal household for a while, together with most of the rest of the ulnage and subsidy income.¹⁷ In 1475 Robert Grene, the king's minstrel, was granted ten marks a year for life.¹⁸ In addition to the grant of income, there was also an order made that he be paid arrears, backdated to September 1473.¹⁹ In 1482 a charge of 12d a day was granted to Thomas Lye the 'king's serjeant at arms as William Thirkeld had'.²⁰ If Thirkeld had had money from the ulnage, it was not enrolled.

This tracing of payments made from the ulnage revenues of Oxford and Berkshire shows that they were realistically related to the income that had been contracted from the farmers. The money may not always have been paid promptly, but it was not over-committed.

¹¹ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1441-1446, p.255 1444 Mar 15. Penycoke's name did not appear after 1424.

¹² *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Hen VI, 1441-1446, p.327 1445 Jan 29.

¹³ *Cal. Close Rolls*, Hen VI, 1441-47, p.248 1445 Jan 29.

¹⁴ *Cal. Close Rolls*, Hen VI, 1447-54, p.309 1452 Jan 31.

¹⁵ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Edw IV, Hen VI, 1467-1477, pp.237-8 1471 Feb 16.

¹⁶ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Edw IV, Edw V, Ric III, 1476-1485, pp.347-8 1472 Aug 4.

¹⁷ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Edw IV, Hen VI, 1467-1477, pp.477-8 1474 Dec 8.

¹⁸ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Edw IV, Hen VI, 1467-1477, p.482 1475 Feb 6.

¹⁹ *Cal. Close Rolls*, Edw IV, 1468-76, p.342 1475 Feb 8.

²⁰ *Cal. Pat. Rolls*, Edw IV, Edw V, Ric III, 1476-1485, pp.341-2 1482 June 29.

Appendix 5 Exchequer Officials mentioned in the Calendar of Fine Rolls in connection with the Ulnage²¹

Roger Appleton described as "of Kent" provided mainprise for William Ryman for the farm of Kent in 1422 and 1427.²² He was an auditor from 1414 to 1467. He was amongst those pardoned for his part in the Cade rebellion of 1450.²³

Richard Bedford acted as a mainpennor in 1449 when he was described as "of the Exchequer".²⁴ He was an auditor from 1429 to 1459.

Peter Bowman has been discussed in the section on repeated references to individuals and was a joint mainpennor with Richard Bedford in 1449.²⁵ Bowman was described as "of the Exchequer".

John Croke is described in the Fine Rolls as a "clerk of the Exchequer" in 1439 when he became the farmer for Devon and Cornwall, a post he seems to have held for 17 years.²⁶ A John Croke was farmer for Herefordshire for 8 years from 1449²⁷ In his second grant of office there, one of his mainpennors was Peter Bowman,²⁸ so it is possible that one John Croke held both farms.

Richard Dewe was an usher of the Exchequer in 1433 when he acted as mainpennor for William Breton for the farm of Kent.²⁹

John Everdon, described in the Fine Rolls as "a clerk of Northants", gave mainprise four times between 1412 and 1427.³⁰ He was an auditor of the Exchequer between 1412 and 1439.

²¹ The details of Exchequer officials are found in J.C. Sainty, *Officers of the Exchequer*, (List and Index Society 18, 1983).

²² *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XIV, 1413-1422, p.432 1422 June 21; XV, 1422-1430, p.190 1427 Nov 12.

²³ Ralph A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry V* (London, 1981) p.621.

²⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XV/III, 1445-1452, p.106 1449 Aug 6.

²⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XV/III, 1445-1452, p.106 1449 Aug 6.

²⁶ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XV/II, 1437-1445, p.64 1439 Aug 8.

²⁷ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XV/III, 1445-1452, pp.77-8 1447 Oct 24. If correctly calendared, this appointment was made nearly 18 months before it was to take effect.

²⁸ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XIX, 1452-1461, p.11 1452 Nov 27.

²⁹ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XI I, 1430-1437, p.177 1433 Oct 14.

Everdon was one of the two clerks put in charge of the expense of bringing Queen Margaret (Henry VI's wife) to England.³¹

Hugh Fraunceis, was an usher of the Exchequer in 1433 when he acted as mainpernor for William Breton for the farm of Kent.³²

William Grene, described in the Calendar of Fine Rolls as "a clerk of the Exchequer" became a joint farmer of Northumberland in 1461.³³ No appointment was made for Northumberland after that date, so it is not clear for how long he served.

Thomas Lewisham was King's Remembrancer from 1426 to 1447. In 1420, Thomas Lewisham, a clerk of Kent, acted as mainpernor for Richard Acton and John Langford in respect of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.³⁴

Thomas Swan was an auditor from 1463 to 1479. A Thomas Swan, "of Bishops Hatfield, Hertfordshire, gentleman" was a mainpernor in 1469.³⁵ It may be the same man but one cannot be certain without further research.

³⁰ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XIII, 1405-1413, p.224, 1412 Mar 12; XIV, 1413-1422, p.9 1413 May 26; p.432 1422 June 21; XV, 1422-1430, p.190 1427 Nov 12.

³¹ Ralph A Griffiths, *The reign of King Henry VI* (London, 1981), p.315.

³² *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XVI, 1430-1437, p.177 1433 Oct 14.

³³ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XX, 1461-1471, p.25 1461 Nov 21.

³⁴ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XIV, 1413-1422, p.279 1420 Jan 12.

³⁵ *Cal. Fine Rolls*, XX, 1461-1471, p.252 1469 Dec 1.

Appendix 6 Instances of Approvers who controlled the cloth legislation in more than two counties³⁶

Eastern England:

1465-03-15	William Whelpdale	Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Norwich
1465-07-29	William Whelpdale	Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Essex, Norwich
1469-12-15	John Flegge	Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Norwich
1471-01-30	Robert Malory, Geoffrey Downes	Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Norwich
1471-07-27	John Flegge the younger	Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Norwich
1474-11-18	John Flegge the younger	Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Norwich
1476-05-18	Richard Bailly	Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Norwich
1476-07-24	John Flegge the younger	Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Norwich

South East England:

1467-11-22	Thomas Markham	Kent, Surrey, Sussex
1478-10-21	Thomas Markham [farmer]	Kent, Surrey, Sussex

South West England:

1464-01-14	Edward Langford, John Bethom	Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire
1467-12-07	Richard More	Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Bristol
1471-06-13	Thomas Gibbs	Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire
1471-07-12	John Farley	Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Cornwall, Devon, Herefordshire
1471-07-06	Richard More	Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire
1471-11-08	Richard More	Devon, Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Surrey, Sussex, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Somerset, Dorset, Worcestershire, Wiltshire, Bristol
1478-06-05	Richard More - farmer	Devon, Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Bristol

³⁶These tables only show Approvers who controlled the cloth legislation in more than two counties at one time. It lists the dates of grant and the lists of the counties which were grouped together and their cloth legislation placed in the hands of approvers. It is not a summary of all grants of approvership, but is intended to show how a few approvers were given widespread responsibilities. Where approvers had holdings of only two counties or less they have been omitted. These lists do not show whether the grants were taken up and if so for how long.

Midlands:

1465-10-02	Thomas Orchard, Thomas Shepherd	Staffordshire, Leicestershire, Worcestershire, Shropshire
1468-01-26	Richard Colwyk	Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire
1469-12-01	Richard Colwyk	Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire
1469-12-08	Robert Hadley	Staffordshire, Shropshire, Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire
1473-10-23	Thomas Aldushay	Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Leicestershire
1479-02-15	Richard Ashby - [farmer]	Shropshire, Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire

Appendix 7 Appointments held by Richard More

Date of Appointment	Counties	Date when appointment took effect	Length of Grant	Post
1467-12-07	Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Bristol ³⁷	Michaelmas last	during pleasure	approver of subsidy and ulnage
1471-07-06	Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire, Salisbury	Easter last	for 3 years	approver of subsidy and ulnage
1471-11-28	Somerset, Dorset	Michaelmas last	during pleasure	approver of subsidy and ulnage
1474-11-08	Devon, Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Surrey, Sussex, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Somerset, Dorset, Worcestershire, Wiltshire, Bristol	Michaelmas last	for 7 years	approver of subsidy and ulnage
1478-06-05	Devon, Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Bristol	Easter last	for 10 years	farmer at £334 viz. £20 Devon and Cornwall, £16 6s 8d Gloucestershire, £27 Oxfordshire and Berkshire, £105 Somerset and Dorset, £75 Wiltshire, 40 marks Hampshire, £64 Bristol.
1485-02-10	Bristol, Wiltshire	Christmas last	for 10 years	farmer at 41 marks Bristol, 81 marks 6s 8d Wiltshire
1485-02-10	Hampshire, Southampton	Michaelmas last	for 10 years	farmer at 40 marks

Source: Calendar Of Fine Rolls

³⁷ Bristol was legally a County, and is treated as such throughout this work.

Appendix 8 List of ulnagers whose social status is given

(in chronological order of appointment)

Name	County	Rank	Date of Appointment
Thomas de Newton	Somerset	esquire	1399, 1399, 1401
John Hull	Wiltshire	esquire	1402
Thomas Darnall	Oxfordshire Berkshire	esquire	1407, 1409
Thomas Parker	Herefordshire	esquire	1417, 1422, 1427
William Ryman	Kent	esquire	1422
Robert Passemer	Warwickshire	esquire	1438, 1444
Robert Waterton	Yorkshire	knight	1440, 1442
Edward Hull	Somerset	esquire	1442
James Fenys	Northamptonshire, Rutland	knight	1444
John Verney	Worcestershire	esquire	1445
John Stoughton	Lincolnshire [part]	esquire	1445
John Trotte	Lincolnshire [part]	esquire	1445
Benet Broun	Surrey, Sussex	esquire	1446
Thomas Clifford	Yorkshire	knight	1448
Walter Calverley	Yorkshire	esquire	1448
Thomas Osbarne	Kent	esquire	1451, 1451
Thomas Clifford	Yorkshire	Lord Clifford and de Westmoreland	1451
William Seingeorge	Somerset	knight	1453, 1453, 1453, 1453
Thomas Claymond	Shropshire	esquire	1453
William Peller	Somerset	yeoman	1453
Thomas Claymond	Lincolnshire	esquire	1454
Richard Roos	Northamptonshire, Rutland	knight	1454
Thomas Tresham	Northamptonshire, Rutland	esquire	1454
John Bouchier	East Anglia	esquire	1455, 1457
John Neville	Yorkshire	knight	1455
John	Yorkshire	earl of Shrewsbury	1455
Ralph lord Cromwell	Yorkshire	knight	1455
Thomas Garth	Yorkshire	esquire	1455
John Hampton	Northamptonshire, Rutland	esquire	1456
Thomas Ormond	East Anglia	esquire	1457, 1459
John Talbot	Yorkshire	esquire	1457
John Ormond	Yorkshire	esquire	1457
William Seward	Somerset, Dorset	esquire	1461, 1462
Thomas Seintleger	Wiltshire	esquire	1462
Thomas Seintleger	Somerset, Dorset	esquire	1462
Edward Langford	Hampshire	esquire	1464
Edward Langford	Oxfordshire, Berkshire	esquire	1464
Edward Langford	Wiltshire	esquire	1464
William Hyde	Oxfordshire, Berkshire	esquire	1467
John Neville	Yorkshire	Marquis of Montagu	1470
Thomas Osbern	Northamptonshire, Rutland	esquire	1471

Name	County	Rank	Date of Appointment
Richard More	Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire	esquire	1471
Thomas Markham	Kent, Surrey, Sussex	esquire	1478
John Billesby	Lincolnshire	gentleman	1478
Ralph Hothorn	Yorkshire	gentleman	1478
John Grobham	Somerset, Dorset, Bristol	esquire	1479
John Risley	East Anglia	esquire	1481, 1483
Edward Brampton	East Anglia	esquire	1481
Humphrey Stafford	Worcestershire, Herefordshire	esquire	1481

Source: Calendar of Fine Rolls

Appendix 9 Ulnagers who were clearly in royal employ

Name	Description	County	Year	Held Office (years)
Simon Blakebourne	king's serjeant at arms	Surrey Sussex	1403	10
Thomas Caundysh	serjeant of the king's cellar	Shropshire	1415	7
Thomas Newton	serjeant of the king's cellar	Shropshire	1415	7
John Hampton	esquire for the body	Northamptonshire, Rutland	1444	8
Robert Westcote	king's yeoman of the crown	Worcestershire	1447	0 ³⁸
Peter Preston	yeoman of the crown	Surrey, Sussex	1450	17
John Raulyn	yeoman of the crown	Surrey, Sussex	1450	7
Thomas Aldushay	of the king's household	Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Leicestershire	1473	4
John Lewis	serjeant at arms	Yorkshire	1478	1 ³⁹

Source: Calendar of Fine Rolls

³⁸ Westcote did not take up this appointment.

³⁹ Lewis was only appointed for 1 year, but no appointment was entolled after him, so his length of tenure is not apparent.

Appendix 10 Multiple References in the Ulnage Records

References to the Name Richard Maryot in the Ulnage Records

Date ⁴⁰	Description	Role	County	Comment
1454 July 20		Farmer	Northamptonshire, Rutland	appointment not taken up
1454 Dec 2	of London gentleman	Mainpernor	Warwickshire	William Essex and Thomas Stratton were outbid and the appointment was probably not taken up
1456 Feb 4	of Buckinghamshire gentleman	Mainpernor	Northamptonshire, Rutland	for William Essex and Thomas Stratton
1459 Jan 24	of London gentleman	Mainpernor	Kent	for Thomas Osborn

Source: Calendar of Fine Rolls

References to Peter Bowman in the Ulnage Records

Date ⁴¹	Description	Role	Place	Comment
1433 Jun 20	of Middlesex	Farmer	Surrey, Sussex	Mainpernors: Richard Dewe, John Thorn, William Kent
1435 Oct 24	of Yorkshire gentleman	Mainpernor	Dorset	Farmer: John Thorne
1440 Jan 4		Farmer	Sherbourne, Dorset	Mainpernors: Walter Whitte, Thomas Marchall
1447 Jul 16		Farmer	Sherbourne, Dorset	Mainpernors: William Essex, Thomas Ryngeston
1449 Feb 20		Farmer	Sherbourne, Dorset	Mainpernors: William Essex, Thomas Ryngeston
1449 Aug 6	of the Exchequer	Mainpernor	Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire	Farmer: George Tromy
1450 Jun 8	of London gentleman	Mainpernor	Kent	Farmer: John Webbe
1452 Nov 27		Mainpernor	Herefordshire	Farmers: John Croke, George Tromy
1457 Feb 9		Approver	London	Mainpernors: John Wentworth, Robert Calcote
1458 Nov 30		Farmer	London	Mainpernors: John Wentworth, Thomas Crosse

Source: Calendar of Fine Rolls

⁴⁰ This is the date of enrolment in the Fine Rolls.

⁴¹ This is the date of enrolment in the Fine Rolls.

Appendix 11 Particulars Of All Officials With Enrolled Letters Patent To Administer The Ulnage In Hampshire

Place	Date of Grant	Time span of grant in years	Time till next grant		Forename	Surname	S or J ⁴²	Office	Occupation	Mainpennor
			Year	Month						
Winchester	1394-07-20		1	4	John	Skilling	S	Ulnager		
Hampshire ex Winchester	1394-07-20		1	4	John	Wallop	S	Ulnager		
Hampshire ex Winchester	1395-11-22		3	11	William	Stunny	S	Ulnager		
Winchester	1395-11-24		3	2	John	Champfleur	S	Ulnager		
Winchester	1399-02-07		0	8	John	Stere	S	Ulnager		
Winchester	1399-10-17		0	1	Robert	Archer	S	Ulnager		
Hampshire ex Winchester	1399-10-17		0	1	John	Balon	S	Ulnager		
Winchester	1399-11-21		0	3	Robert	Archer	S	Ulnager		
Hampshire ex Winchester	1399-11-21		3	10	John	Balon	S	Ulnager		
Winchester	1400-02-05	3	0	10	Robert	Archer	S	Ulnager		
Winchester	1400-12-12		0	7	John	Dollyng	S	Ulnager		
Winchester	1401-07-01		0	2	John	Dollyng	S	Ulnager		
Winchester	1401-10-03	3	2	0	Robert	Archer	S	Ulnager		Edmund Pykard, John Newman, of Winchester
Hampshire and Winchester	1404-01-31	1	5	0	Henry John	Somer Stere	J2	Farmer at £30		Mark le Faire of Hampshire , Richard Maydenstone of Kent
Hampshire and Winchester	1409-01-16	10	4	7	Mark le John	Faire Merlawe ⁴³	J2	Farmer at £30		William Archer of Winchester, Thomas Sutton of Winchester
Hampshire and Winchester	1413-05-17	10	1	11	John William	Arnold ⁴⁴ Gervays ⁴⁵	J2	Farmer at £30 + £2	the younger	John Arnold esquire the elder, John Rede of London
Hampshire and Winchester	1415-04-24	10	7	6	Thomas William	Smale Wode	J2	Farmer at £32	mayor of W	Richard Goolde of Hampshire , Richard Bolt of Hampshire
Hampshire and Winchester	1422-12-08	10	8	0	John William	Veel Wode	J2	Farmer at £32		John Rokele esquire of Hampshire John Bee of Hampshire
Hampshire and Winchester	1431-06-16	7	1	9	John	Veel	S	Farmer at £32		Richard Bolte of Winchester gentleman, John Pole of Soton esquire
Place	Date of Grant	Time span of grant in years	Time till next grant		Forename	Surname	S or J ⁴⁶	Office	Occupation	Mainpennor

⁴² S or J means that the post was held singly (S) or jointly (J) with the number showing how many men were a syndicate where such existed.

⁴³ Merlawe submitted a return on behalf of Henry Somer and John Stere in 1403, but none was submitted in his own name. He held office during the time when returns were not enrolled for Hampshire.

⁴⁴ No returns were enrolled from John Arnold, but he held office during the period when no returns were submitted.

⁴⁵ No returns were enrolled from William Gervays, but he held office during the period when no returns were submitted.

Place	Date of Grant	Time span of grant in years	Time till next grant		Forename	Surname	S or J ⁴⁷	Office	Occupation	Mainpernor
			Year	Month						
Hampshire and Winchester	1432-06-22	10	9	7	Walter John	Hore Writher	J2	Farmer at £32 + 13s 4d		Richard Tumant of Winchester gentleman, Robert Colpays of Winchester gentleman
Hampshire and Winchester	1442-01-25	50	19	8	John Stephen Peter	Christmas Ede Hill	J3	Farmer at £32 13s 4d + 13s 4d		none
Hampshire and Winchester	1462-05-20	21	2	0	Richard Richard William John John Thomas Thomas John Robert John William William	Bole Bowlonde Colvile Coteler Kent Mordon Poterne Putte Reynold Salzman Silvester Spicer	J12	Farmer at £33 6s 8d		Christopher Hanyngton gentleman of London, Thomas Combe gentleman of London
Hampshire and Winchester	1464-01-14		3	0	John Edward	Berthom ⁴⁸ Langford ⁴⁹	J2	Approver		Edmund Garston, Richard Savage
Hampshire and Winchester	1467-07-01		1	0	Robert John	Burell Hamond	J2	Approver		Henry Bergeys of Southwells Hampshire yeoman, John Wheteman of London gentleman
Hampshire, Gloucestershire	1468-01-27	during pleasure	2	0	John	Fadey	S	Approver		John Capull of Capull Herefordshire, Thomas More of London gentleman
Hampshire and Winchester, Isle of Wight	1470-12-01	7	1	6	Thomas	Newby ⁵⁰	S	Farmer at £33 6s 8d		John Hulyn of Alton Hampshire gentleman, William Hoggeham of Lasham Hampshire gentleman
Place	Date of Grant	Time span of grant in years	Time till next grant		Forename	Surname	S or J ⁵¹	Office	Occupation	Mainpernor

⁴⁶ S or J means that the post was held singly (S) or jointly (J) with the number showing how many men were a syndicate where such existed.

⁴⁷ S or J means that the post was held singly (S) or jointly (J) with the number showing how many men were a syndicate where such existed.

⁴⁸ No returns from John Berthom were enrolled.

⁴⁹ No returns from Edward Langford were enrolled.

⁵⁰ No return was submitted by Thomas Newby, but one was submitted by John Fadey to cover the period from Michaelmas 1469 to Michaelmas 1471, which would mean that Fadey put in a return for the period when Newby might have expected to hold office.

			Year	Month						
Devon, Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Hampshire	1471-07-12	during pleasure	3	5	John	Farley	S	Approver		
Hampshire and Winchester	1471-08-18	3		0	Vincent	Pittlesden ⁵²	S	Approver		Richard Toumer brewer of London, Thomas Neel grocer of London
Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Bristol	1474-11-08	7	3	6	Richard	More	S	Approver		Richard Exton gentleman of London, Walter Nele yeoman of London
Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Bristol	1478-06-05	10	4	6	Richard	More	S	Farmer at £334 viz £20 Devon and Cornwall, £16 6s 8d Gloucestershire, £27 Oxford and Berkshire, £105 Somerset and Dorset, £75 Wiltshire, £26 13s 4d Hampshire, £64 Bristol		John Tailleur of Exeter merchant, Richard Colwyk of Worcester grasier, Thomas Parre of Reading clothmaker, William Colwell of Wells Somerset clothmaker, Richard More of Bristol merchant, John Pyper of Salisbury clothmaker
Wiltshire, Hampshire	1483-12-09	7	1	0	John	Hall	S	Farmer at £75 Wiltshire, £26 13s 4d Hampshire, + 6d		William Fennour chapman of Salisbury, William Arnold clothier of Salisbury
Southampton	1484-03-07	7	0	8	John	Walker ⁵³	S	Farmer at 6s 8d		Richard Walker of London grocer, Anthony Spynell of Southampton merchant
Hampshire and Winchester	1485-02-10	10			Richard	More	S	Farmer at £26 13s 4d		Richard More of Bristol merchant, Robert Knyght of Thatcham Berkshire yeoman

Source: *Calendar of Fine Rolls*

⁵¹ S or J means that the post was held singly (S) or jointly (J) with the number showing how many men were a syndicate where such existed.

⁵² No return was submitted by Vincent Pittlesden, and returns were submitted by John Farley which covered the period when Pittlesden was allegedly in office.

⁵³ No return was submitted by John Walker.

Members of the Consortium of the Farm of the Ulnage in 1462

Name	Cloths ulnaged in 1466/7
Richard Bole	2 cloths
Richard Bowlonde	
William Colvile	10 cloths
John Coteler	
John Kent	18 cloths
Thomas Mordon	dead
Thomas Poterne	8 cloths
John Putte	
Robert Reynold	dead
John Salman	69½ cloths
William Spicer	
William Sylvester	36 kerseys

The twelve members of the corporation who jointly undertook the farm of the ulnage in Winchester from 1461 to 1463 are listed in the table above. Six of them presented cloths to the ulnager in 1466/7, four did not, and two had died. Biographical details are available about most of these men, and they are included because this partnership to administer the ulnage was without parallel, and has a certain curiosity value. In examining the activities of the twelve who served jointly from 1461 to 1463, a study is being made of the Corporation as much as of the administration of the ulnage. They are leading citizens of Winchester, as was Peter Hill, the farmer whom they succeeded. When they are compared with the ulnagers from the early years of the century the relative narrowness of their range of interests is apparent. It has not been possible to find references to all of them, but ten of them are to be found in surviving records of the City. Although they had all held posts connected with the administration of Winchester, over and above being members of the corporation, their commercial activities were clearly their prime concerns, but they do not seem to have the breadth of activities of their forebears of 70 years before.

Richard Bole was an active merchant and freeman of Winchester.⁵⁴ Richard Bowlonde, a draper, held various offices including that of mayor and MP.⁵⁵ William Colvile was a wool merchant who was mayor in 1461-2, and again in 1463-4.⁵⁶ He was therefore mayor for much of the time when the twelve acted as farmers of the ulnage. John Coteler, a vintner, occupied

⁵⁴ K.E. Stevens and T.E. Olding ed., *Brokage Books of Southampton 1477-8 and 1527-8* (Southampton, 1985) *passim*.

⁵⁵ WS ii p.1171.

⁵⁶ WS ii p.1199.

various civic offices although he never became mayor.⁵⁷ John Kent was a chandler, who traded in a wide range of commodities, and found time to take various offices including that of mayor.⁵⁸ Another sometime mayor and MP, was Thomas Poterne who dealt in wool and rented a large messuage which contained a tenter.⁵⁹ John Putte, a draper,⁶⁰ and William Spicer, a grocer,⁶¹ both included being mayor in their range of civic offices. On the other hand John Salman never rose higher than becoming one of the bailiffs of the City,⁶² while William Sylvester who held land called Frenches in Priors Dean, Colemore⁶³ was not recorded as holding any civic office. There is no trace at all of Robert Reynold and Thomas Mordon, both of whom were said to be dead by the time the return was submitted to the Exchequer.⁶⁴ Such then were the leading men of Winchester who agreed to hold the ulnage jointly rather than let it pass out of the control of the City.

⁵⁷ WS ii p.1203-4.

⁵⁸ WS ii p.1276.

⁵⁹ WS ii p.1324.

⁶⁰ WS ii p.1202.

⁶¹ WS ii p.1355.

⁶² WS ii p.1339.

⁶³ WCM 11691, p.491.

⁶⁴ Is it a coincidence that the two men said to be dead by the time of the return are the two for whom there is no trace in the contemporary records? Did they really exist? It is difficult to see what purpose could have been served by including fictitious people on the list.

Appendix 12 Numbers of Seals Held by Richard More for Various Counties 1476-1478

County	Substance	Seals for subsidy	Seals for ulnage	Total number
Bristol	iron	2 standard ⁶⁵	4 trussell	6
Devon and Cornwall	copper ⁶⁶	6	6	12
Gloucester	copper	7	7	14
Hampshire	copper	14	14	28
Herefordshire	steel and iron	6	6	12
Oxford and Berkshire	iron	3	3	6
Somerset and Dorset	copper			16
Surrey and Sussex	iron	2 standard	13 trussell	15
Warwickshire ⁶⁷				6
Wiltshire	iron	10	10	20

⁶⁵ The standard seal was used above, and the trussell seal, below the material, either lead or wax, on which the impression was to be made. The standard was then hit in order to make the impressions. This reference does not say how many seals for each of the subsidy and the ulnage.

⁶⁶ *auriculatus* - This was a copper alloy.

⁶⁷ The return gives no details for Warwickshire.

Appendix 13

Details of Cloth Seized by the Hampshire and Winchester Ulnagers between 1394 and 1485

End Of Ulnage Period	Cloth	Unit Price	Total Value	Owner
			£ s d	
1395-11-24	2 striped cloths 3 pieces Welsh		2 13 4. 1 0 0.	Mark le Faire, Winchester
1395-11-24	1 piece russet		0 5 0.	Henry Hosier, Winchester
1395-11-24	2 pieces Welsh		0 6 0.	John Denyton, Winchester
1399-02-07	4 yards striped		0 3 4.	Henry Hosyer, Winchester
1395-11-22	3 yards russet 1 dozen red oset 6 yards kersey 5 yards black 5 yards serge 2 yards medley 5 yards oset blanket 1 dozen blanket 4 yards freize		1 18 1.	not given, county
1397-05-07	2 yards green 19 yards strait russet 6½ yards Brakett' 2 yards russett		1 2 6.	not given, county
1398-04-07	various		0 17 0.	not given, county
1399-05-01	various		0 3 4.	not given, county
1405-09-29	20 ells blue Cyprus lawn [Waget]		0 13 4.	John Sheffield, Soke of Winchester
1417-02-02	5 yards woollen		0 6 0.	Richard Wyghteryng, Winchester
1417-10-18	2 whole cloths of wool		3 0 0.	not given
1427-09-29	2½ red cloths without grain		4 0 0.	John Edward, Winchester
1436-09-29	7 ells black	10d/ell	0 5 10.	Simon Long, Romsey
1438-09-29	12 ells white kersey		0 10 0.	William Lyfe
1439-09-29	5 yards blue	20d/yd	0 8 4.	Simon Bulford, Frenchman of Winchester
1441-09-29	4 pieces kersey			"left by a certain foreign person in possession of Richard Fynes of Alton who is answerable to the king
1444-02-02	16 yards white kersey	6d/yd	0 8 0.	John Barbour
1444-02-02	1 piece red cloth		1 6 8.	John Blake, Romsey
1448-09-29	6 yards blue	15d/yd	0 7 6.	Richard Hert, Winchester
1452-09-29	16 yards kersey		0 6 8.	Richard Tye, Wonston
1453-09-29	1 wide white cloth, 24 yards		1 13 4.	William Heckley, Southampton, carter
1463-09-29	15 yards kersey per lynyng 1 remnant white kersey, 14 ells	4d/ell 7¾d/ell	0 5 0. 0 7 0½	John Hosyer, Romsey John Rawlyn, Newport

⁶⁸ From this seizure onwards, half the value of the cloth was retained by the ulnager, and half remitted to the Exchequer. Prior to this date, the ulnagers had remitted the whole value of seized cloth to the Exchequer.

Appendix 14 Reference of the Surviving Particular Ulnage Returns from Winchester
1394-1402

Source	Start Date	End Date	Number Of Items	Number Of Names	Number Of Identifiable People	% Of Identifiable People
E 101/344 /10	20 July 1394	24 Nov 1395	186	168	101	60
E 101/344 /17	25 Oct 1397	16 May 1398	147	145	83	57
E 101/344 /12	2 May 1398	7 Feb 1399	266	124	78	63
E 101/344 /17	29 Sept 1401	21 Sep 1402	177	177	104	59
TOTAL			776	614	366	60

Appendix 15 Cloth Production in the Towns of Hampshire 1394-1403

Source	Town	Number Of Entries	No Of Different Names	Number Of Identifiable People	Cloths Presented
<i>E 101/344/11: 20 July 1394 to 22 November 1395 - 16 months</i>					
	Alresford	7	6	3	72 cloths,
	Alton	16	13	5	81½ cloths
	Andover	18	18	1	86 cloths, 4 dozens ⁶⁹
	Fareham	19	11	0	140 dozens, 35 small pieces of cloth containing 14 cloths of assise and 5 yards
	Havant	14	14	1	43½ cloths
	Isle of Wight	89	84	0	393 kerseys
	Romsey	33	26	7	354 dozens, 96 small pieces of cloth containing 33 cloths of assise
	Southampton	48	47	20	76½ cloths, 69 small pieces of cloth containing 17 cloths of assise and 15 yards
TOTAL		244	219	37	970 cloths and ¼ cloth⁷⁰
<i>E 101/344/14: 7 April 1398 to 1 May 1398 - 1 month</i>					
	Alresford	3	3	0	5½ cloths
	Alton	3	3	3	3 cloths
	Andover	3	3	1	3 cloths
	Basingstoke	2	2	0	2 cloths
	Fareham	2	2	0	2 cloths
	Havant	4	4	0	2 cloths, 1 narrow cloth
	Isle of Wight	4	4	0	36 kerseys
	Romsey	4	4	1	11 cloths
	Southampton	4	4	0	6½ cloths
TOTAL		57	57	19	53½ cloths
<i>E 101/344/17: 18 November 1401 to 12 November 1402 - 12 months</i>					
	Alresford	6	6	2	14 1/3 cloths
	Andover	4	4	1	12 cloths
	Basingstoke and Alton	7	7	3	15 1/5 cloths
	Fareham and Titchfield	4	4	0	17¾ cloths
	Havant	4	4	1	8 ¾ cloths
	Romsey	9	9	3	35 ½ cloths

⁶⁹ Dozens and kerseys were smaller cloths than a full cloth of assise and paid at half the rate.

⁷⁰ These totals have been converted into standard units of their broadcloth equivalents.

	Southampton	6	6	4	21 1/3 cloths
TOTAL		40	40	14	125 cloths
<i>E 101/344/17: 12 November 1402 to 12 November 1403 - 12 months</i>					
	Alresford	6	6	2	26 cloths
	Alton	2	2	2	9 cloths
	Isle of Wight	25	25	0	214 kerseys
	Romsey	6	6	1	57 cloths
	Southampton	4	4	2	11 cloths
TOTAL		43	43	7	210 cloths
SUM TOTAL		513	488	103	

Note:

There is a problem with three of the documents viz. E 101/344/9, E 101/344/13 and E 101/344/14, which each relate to the County excluding Winchester.

The document E 101/344/9 was roughly written, is undated, and is headed with the statement that it is the account of John Balon. It gives a list of names together with types of cloth.

The bundle E 101/344/13 covered the period from 7 April 1398 to 1 May 1398 and consisted of three membranes. Membrane 1 listed 14 taxpayers, although it gives no location for them, followed by the statement that no cloths were seized. Membrane 2 consisted of a recitation of John Balon's letters patent setting out his legal powers. Finally membrane 3 discharged him from office because Henry Joce of Andover has been appointed ulnager. The return was duly enrolled in the Ulnage Roll⁷¹ and a sum of £1 0s 0¾d was duly accounted for.

E 101/344/14 comprises a single membrane that is undated. Its heading states that these are the particulars of the account of John Balon. The list is badly faded, particularly on the left hand side where the forenames were written although most of the surnames are legible. The list was subdivided by town and the details of account are clear. There were twenty-nine names on the list and the total payment amounts to £1 0s 0¾d which is the same sum as is found on E 101/344/9.

There can be little doubt that E 101/344/14 was a fair copy of E 101/344/9. Because the moneys accounted for in E 101/344/14 and E 101/344/13 are the same, and this total is to be found nowhere else, it is also probable that they relate to the same period of office. If this is the

⁷¹ E 358/8 m 8.

case, then the clerk who wrote the particular account for the Exchequer did not render an accurate list of taxpayers, but omitted some names, although he accounted for the same sum of money. However the names on E 101/344/13 bear very little relationship to those on the other two documents. It is difficult to imagine where the clerk obtained the list that he used.⁷² There is no obvious explanation for the existence of this list, and my assumption that it is a defective return for the same period as the other two is but speculation.

⁷² It is much easier to copy an existing list than to invent a wholly new one, or even to make changes to an existing one.

Appendix 16 Numbers of Cloths Presented in Hampshire

Numbers Of Cloths Presented To The Ulnagers In Winchester In 43 Months Between July 1394 To September 1402

Number of Cloths each	Number of Taxpayers	Total number of Cloths	Thirds
>95	17	2227.9	1 st third of cloths
70-75	3	218.5	
60-69	4	263.8	
50-59	8	427.5	
40-49	11	486.7	
30-39	24	826.6	2 nd third of cloth
25-29	8	213.5	
20-24.5	25	537.5	
15-19	28	458.9	
10-14.5	41	466.7	
5-9	53	345	
1/2-4 1/2	170	351.3	3 rd third of cloth
Total	392	6823.9	

Source: The ulnagers' surviving particular accounts (listed above)

Relative numbers of ulnage payers in Hampshire, excluding the Isle of Wight

Number of Cloths each	Number of Taxpayers	Total number of Cloths
30-39	3 ⁷³	96
25-29	3	79.5
20-24.5	5	104.7
15-19.5	6	100
10-14.5	8	91.2
5-9.5	35	228.9
0.5-4.5	114	204.9
Totals	174	905.2 ⁷⁴

Source: Particular returns for Hampshire [see Appendix 1]

⁷³ Joint payers are counted as 1 person in this table.

⁷⁴ These totals understate the position because the return of 1401-2 does not show the amounts paid by individuals, although it names them and gives totals for each town.

Relative numbers of ulnage payers in the Isle of Wight

Number of Kerseys each ⁷⁴	Number of Taxpayers	Total number of kerseys
60-69	1	60
40-49	1	40
20-24.5	3	62
15-19.5	5	83
10-14.5	12	141
5-9.5	53	370
0.5-4.5	27	97
Totals	102	853

Source: Particular returns for Hampshire [see Appendix 1]

⁷⁴ I have used the same grouping of numbers of cloths. In fact there were no submissions equivalent to half a cloth of the Isle of Wight.

Appendix 17 Monthly Rates of Ulnage

Calculations Showing Nominal Monthly Rate Of Ulnage Payment In Winchester

	Ulnager	Dates	Time In Months	No Of Cloths ⁷⁵	Monthly Average cloths	Subsidy And Ulnage
						£ s d
1	John Skillyng	20 July 94 to 24 Nov 95	16.0	3141.5	196.3	58 18 2¼
2	John Chaunflour	24 Nov 95 to 29 Jan 96	2.0	0 ⁷⁶	0	0
3	John Fromond	24 Nov 95 ⁷⁷ to 24 Oct 97	23.0	3257.2	153.4	61 1 11¼
4	John Dollyng	25 Oct 97 to 16 May 98	6.5	1077.3	165.7	20 4 0.
5	Nicholas Tanner	2 May 98 to 7 Feb 99	9.0	1103.2	122.6	20 14 3¼
6	John Steer	7 Feb 99 to 17 Oct 99	8.5	1495.0	175.9	28 0 7½
7	Robert Archer	21 Nov 99 to 12 Dec 00	13.0	2041.0	156.2	38 5 6¼
8	John Dollyng	12 Dec 00 to 5 Feb 01	2.0	467.5	233.8	8 15 3.
9	Robert Archer	5 Feb 01 to 1 July 01	5.0	804.5	160.9	13 8 2.
10	John Dollyng	1 July 01 to 3 Oct.01	3.0	206.5	68.3	3 17 5¼
11	Robert Archer	3 Oct 01 to 13 Jan 02	3.5	279.5	79.9	5 4 9¼
12	Robert Archer	13 Feb 02 to 29 Sept 02	7.5	1241.5	165.5	23 5 6¼
13	Robert Archer	29 Sept 02 to 29 Sep 03	12.0	1736.8	144.7	32 11 4¼
14	Robert Archer	29 Sept 03 to 30 Jan 04	4	0 ⁷⁸	0	0

Ratios of the Returns for Hampshire

	Ulnager	Dates	Time Length In Months	No Of Cloths ⁷⁹	Monthly Average Cloths	Subsidy And Ulnage
						£ s d
1	John Walhop	20 July 94 to 22 Nov 95	16.0	⁸⁰ 970.3	60.6	18 3 11¼
2	William Sturmy	22 Nov 95 to 7 May 97	17.5	1618.6	92.5	30 8 4.
3	John Balon	7 May 97 to 7 April 98	11.0	1024.0	93.1	19 4 0¼
4	John Balon	7 April 98 to 1 May 98	1.0	53.5	53.5	1 0 0¾
5	Henry Joce	1 May 98 to 1 May 99	12.0	744.0	62.0	13 19 0.
6	John Balon	17 Oct 99 to 26 Jan 01	15.0	217.5	14.5	4 1 7½
7	John Balon	26 Jan 01 to 14 Nov 01	9.5	115.5	12.2	2 3 3¾
8	John Balon	14 Nov 01 to 12 Nov 02	12.0	125.0	10.4	2 6 10½
9	John Balon	12 Nov 02 to 12 Nov 03	12.0	226.0	18.8	4 0 3½
10	John Balon	12 Nov 03 to 31 Jan 04	2.5	0	-	

Source: *Ulnage Roll E 358/8*

⁷⁵ This figure is nominal. It comprises whole cloths, and has aggregated kerseys and dozens to their whole cloth equivalents. They paid at half rates.

⁷⁶ No revenue was attributed to this account.

⁷⁷ Although a return was made by John Chaunflour for the two months, it would appear that no revenue was accounted for by him; instead any money collected during his tenure of office was accounted for by John Fromond, the ulnager responsible for this return.

⁷⁸ No revenue because of the creation of a farm.

⁷⁹ This figure is nominal. It comprises whole cloths, and kerseys and dozens which paid at half price.

⁸⁰ The figures are given as a total of each cloths, kerseys and dozens. The number standard cloths (969) do not appear to match the amount of money paid in either subsidy (970¼) or ulnage (972).

Appendix 18 Changes in the Number of People Presenting Cloths to the Ulnagers 1394-5 and 1466-7

1394-5		1466-7	
Town	Number of people ⁸¹	Town	Number of people
Alresford	7		0
Alton	16	Alton, Headley, Petersfield, East Meon	13
Andover and Basingstoke	18	Andover and Whitchurch	6
		Basingstoke	6
		Odiham	7
Fareham	17	Fareham	0
Havant	14	Havant	0
Isle of Wight	89	Isle of Wight	37
Romsey	30	Romsey	18
Southampton	48	Southampton	34
Winchester	187	Winchester City	70
	0	Soke of Winchester	18
	0	Fawley, Lymington, Christchurch	5
TOTAL Payers	426		214
Total payment	£77 2s 1¼d		£30 11s 4¼d
Average payment per person	3s 7½d		2s 10¼d
Pro rata payment for 12 months	2s 9d		

⁸¹ Where names were repeated, each occurrence has been counted separately. Groups of payers have been counted as one.

Appendix 19 Comparison of ulnage and subsidy collected in 1394-5 and 1466-7

Town 16 months 1394-5	Revenue ⁸²	Calculate d Annual Rate of Payment	Type of cloth	Town 12 months 1466-7	Revenue ⁸³	Comparison with calculated annual value	Type of cloth
	£ s d.	£ s d.			£ s d.		
Winchester	58 18 2.	44 3 7½	cloths	Winchester	12 11 3¼	down (31 12 4¼)	cloths, kerseys
Isle of Wight	5 11 2½	4 3 4¼	dozens	Isle of Wight	3 11 3.	down (0 12 1¼)	kerseys
Southampton	1 15 5¾	1 6 8.	cloths	Southampton	0 19 9¾	down (0 6 9½)	cloths, kerseys, straits
Andover and Basingstoke	1 13 0.	1 4 9.	cloths and dozens	Andover and Whitchurch Basingstoke and Odiham	1 17 6. 1 8 4¾	up 2 2 1¾.	cloths, kerseys kerseys, 2 cloths
Fareham	1 11 7¼	1 3 8½	dozens	Fareham	0	down (1 3 8½)	
Alton	1 10 4¾	1 2 9½	cloths	Alton, Headley, Petersfield, East Meon	2 3 6.	up 1 0 8½.	kerseys
	0			Soke of Winchester	3 14 0¾	up 2 13 8¼.	kerseys, cloths
Alresford	1 7 2.	1 0 4½	cloths		0		
Romsey	3 18 9.	2 19 0¾	dozens	Romsey	4 2 8¼	up 1 3 7½.	cloths
Havant	0 16 3½	0 12 2¾	cloths	Havant	0	down (0 12 2¾)	
	0			Fawley, Lymington, Christchurch	0 1 10½		kerseys
TOTAL	77 2 1¼	57 16 6¼			30 11 4¼	down 27 5 2½	

⁸² The actual amounts collected are the first figures. The figures in parentheses are approximate pro rata figures for 12 months, i.e. three quarters of the total

⁸³ The changes are calculated with reference to the calculated figures for 12 months in 1394/5, and are therefore approximations.

Appendix 20 The Ulnage Returns from 1467 to 1478

The names listed and the number of cloths attributed to them are tabulated in the table at the end of this Appendix. The names have been re-arranged in alphabetical order to make comparisons easier. The last two returns, although not alphabetical in the original, followed exactly the same order of names. The list shows how stylised the returns were compared with the detail found in the return of 1466-7. That the central government was not controlling its agents too well is hardly surprising in view of the unsettled times around 1470. Perhaps the wonder is that the bureaucracy continued to function as well as it did and that revenues were collected, returned to the Exchequer and enrolled in the middle of civil war.

for Hampshire

Names of Taxpayers on the Ulnage Returns from 1467 to 1478

	1467/8	1468/9	1469/70	1470/1	1471-2	1474-6	1476-8
Total No. of Cloths ⁸⁴	1524 ⁸⁵	1377	1104	1076	1450	2881	
							2160
							1440
Thomas Asthe					52		
William Badell		6					
Henry Baker						153	110
William Barker, of Newport					80 kerseys		
Robert Baron					30		
John Bateson						80	60
William Bedell	22						
the same William Bedell	10						
Thomas Bennet					40		
William Bery						126	70
Richard Bird, of Isle of Wight			72 kerseys	72 kerseys			
John Blewet			60	60	124	48	23
William Blewet						10	8
John Bole			40	40			
William Bolle	36						
Roger Bord					66		
Richard Botell	127	128					
Robert Bowland	175	30					
William Baxter					38		
Richard Brewer	100 ½	30	30 kerseys	30 kerseys	6		
Henry Bright		25					
John Broke			18	18			
Hugh Brown						54	40
Robert Brown						44	31
Edward Bull					132		
William Bull		134					
William Burgen					44		

⁸⁴ Note 3 kerseys = 1 cloth.

4 straits = 1 cloth.

⁸⁵ The figures show number of cloths unless otherwise stated. For the totals, lesser cloths have been rendered into nominal broadcloths.

	1467/8	1468/9	1469/70	1470/1	1471-2	1474-6	1476-8
Thomas Byne			18	18			
William Byne						24	
Richard Byrrell			60	60			
John Calley	77	38					
Thomas Card						46	31
Thomas a Castell			12	12			
William Chandler						80	60
William Child		57					
Thomas Clerk		70					
Thomas Clerke, junior	65						
John Clifford			15 kerseys	15 kerseys			
John Cornish	70	43					
Thomas Cornish						100	70
John Coteler						30	22
Nicholas Crokker			30	30			
Robert Culley			32				
Richard Dale						63	45
William Davis					18		
William Draper					44		
John Driver					12		
John Dyer	-		120 kerseys	120 kerseys			
Roger Dyer						29	29
William Dyer						36	28
Robert Fisher			40	40		16	12
John Fold						26	16
John Fox			6	6			
Robert Gale, of Ramsey [sic], dyer			94	94			
William Galle						26	33
John Garde			18	18			
Thomas Garde					8		
Thomas Garde, dyer			90 kerseys	90 kerseys			
William Gardner					171		
John Glover						115	60
Thomas Goodyer						160	120
John Hamond						15	11
Philip Hamond					18		
William Hamond					20		
Thomas Heth			34	34			
John Heyne						112	82
John Houton						43	16
William Hyde						60	120
Richard Ironmonger					24		
Henry Jackson						80	109
John Johnson			28	28			
Richard Kent						26	16
William Kyne ⁸⁶							16
John Lane						50	33
William Launder					18		
John Lavender						60	45
Robert Loker						27	17

⁸⁶ This name may be Byne.

	1467/8	1468/9	1469/70	1470/1	1471-2	1474-6	1476-8
John Lorde					18		
John Man	38	36					
Richard Martyn			50	50			
John Merry						18	14
John Mill	18	32					
William Mill						19	15
William Myller					60		
John Nicholl						51 cloths, 8 yards	33
William Parker						110	76
Richard Potter			16	16			
William Pothycary	100	20					
William Reed						12	9
John Richard		90					
Robert Rikerdes					24		
Robert Riley						90	60
William Robins			28	18			
John Robins, of Isle of Wight					120 kerseys		
Thomas Rother						46	31
Thomas Russell						70	54
John Smyth						29	14
John Somer	191	106					
John Stokeman						28	17
Henry Stublely						116	90
William Swift	70	46					
Henry Tailor						55	34
John Tailor			12	12			
Maurice Tailor	94	71					
Richard Tailor						28	20
Robert Tulle				32			
John Walker						80	60
Richard Walker			86	86			
Thomas Walker			18	18	150		
William Walker					17½ cloths, 6 yards		
William Walton						150	110
William Wanes						60	
Richard Ward	63	64					
Robert Warmester, weaver	204	93	100	100			
William Wattes		34					45
Richard Wattes, draper					65		
Robert Webbe			90	90			
Richard William Webbe and Bowman jointly			105	105			
John Wern	31	12			60		
Thomas Weston						100	75
Jenyn Wever					14		
John Wever					86		
William Weye						30	30
Richard Wild	32	212					
John Wilmas						50	40
Robert Willis					12		
William Ykkys					12		

Appendix 21 Chronology of the History of the Medieval Ulnage

Year	King	Event
1353	Edward III	Subsidy granted to the king on woollen cloth, together with a fee for the ulnaging of such cloths
1394	Richard II	All local administration placed in the hands of directly employed ulnagers.
1399	Richard II	June, July: Eleven counties let to farm.
1399	Henry IV	Oct: Directly employed ulnagers appointed
1399	Henry IV	Nov: Ulnagers re-appointed because the previous grants were defective.
1403	Henry IV	Directly employed ulnagers re-placed by farmers, although not all replaced immediately.
1413	Henry V	Accession and appointment of farmers.
1422	Henry VI	Accession. Farmers only re-appointed slowly.
1450s, early	Henry VI	Rise in frequency of appointments, several being much contested.
1461	Edward IV	Accession and appointment of farmers.
1464	Edward IV	Farmers replaced by approvers.
1470-1	Henry VI	Approvers replaced by farmers.
1471	Edward IV	Farmers replaced by approvers.
1478	Edward IV	Approvers abolished and replaced by farmers.

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¹ This list reproduces the catalogue description found in the PRO. Its accuracy is discussed in Appendix 1.

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