

NATIONAL DEFENCE IN ENGLAND,

1337-89

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the
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by John Richard Alban. September, 1976.

SUMMARY

The war with France between 1337 and 1389 brought with it enemy attacks upon the English coasts and upon English shipping. Although the intensity of enemy naval activity on the home front did not match the intensity of warfare on the continent, the threat to the realm was a persistent one, which necessitated protracted defensive measures and which was a central issue in the lives of many Englishmen.

This thesis examines the problems caused by the need for defence, and describes and analyses the defensive system in England between the two terminal dates. It is divided into two parts. Part One is a chronological account of the defensive situation between 1337 and 1389. Part Two examines the various aspects of defence and its organization, attempts to illustrate its efficiency, and investigates its effects upon contemporary Englishmen.

The French naval raids were a continuation of the Scottish naval attacks of the early 1330s. French incursions chiefly took the form of hit and run raids, although full-scale invasion was projected in 1339 and in 1385-6. The late 1330s and the 1370s and 1380s witnessed attacks of sometimes terrifying intensity which often stretched English defensive resources to the limit, and which had a significant influence on domestic and

political affairs in England. In contrast, the 1340s and 1350s were relatively quiet years for the defenders. The varying intensity of the enemy threat was largely due to the general course of the war and not to the efficiency of the defensive system.

Within the period, the threat to the realm came not merely from the continent. The Scots frequently menaced the northern shires, while the danger from Wales was regarded by the authorities as very real.

By an investigation of the communal obligation to provide defensive service, and of the roles played by defensive officials and troops serving under them, one sees that the defensive system, although, in its broad framework, based on a tradition which had evolved over the centuries, underwent constant internal change throughout the period covered by this study. Particularly significant was the amalgamation of the office of the keepers of the maritime lands and that of the defensive arrayers in the 1370s.

Within the system of coastal defence, beacons were employed to give warning. The beacon, which had been known for centuries, was redefined in its use in the fourteenth century under the influence of prolonged war. Fixed fortifications were important coastal defences, and the threat of enemy attack led to widespread building activity. Constructional works reflect the fear of the times, while invasion threats in the 1370s and 1380s caused fortifications to be erected on the coast and inland. Temporary fortifications were also important in coastal regions.

Defence at sea was equally necessary, and the weakness of the navy was frequently blamed for the success of enemy raids. Despite widespread naval activity, it is clear that in the naval war, the advantages usually lay with the attackers. It was thus essential that the English were forewarned of the enemy's intentions, and intelligence was important to national defence. Enemy espionage in England, however, necessitated stringent security measures.

English possessions overseas were important bases for intelligence. They also supposedly served as the 'first line of defence' of the realm, but as such, could never be entirely successful while the French had access to the Channel coast of France.

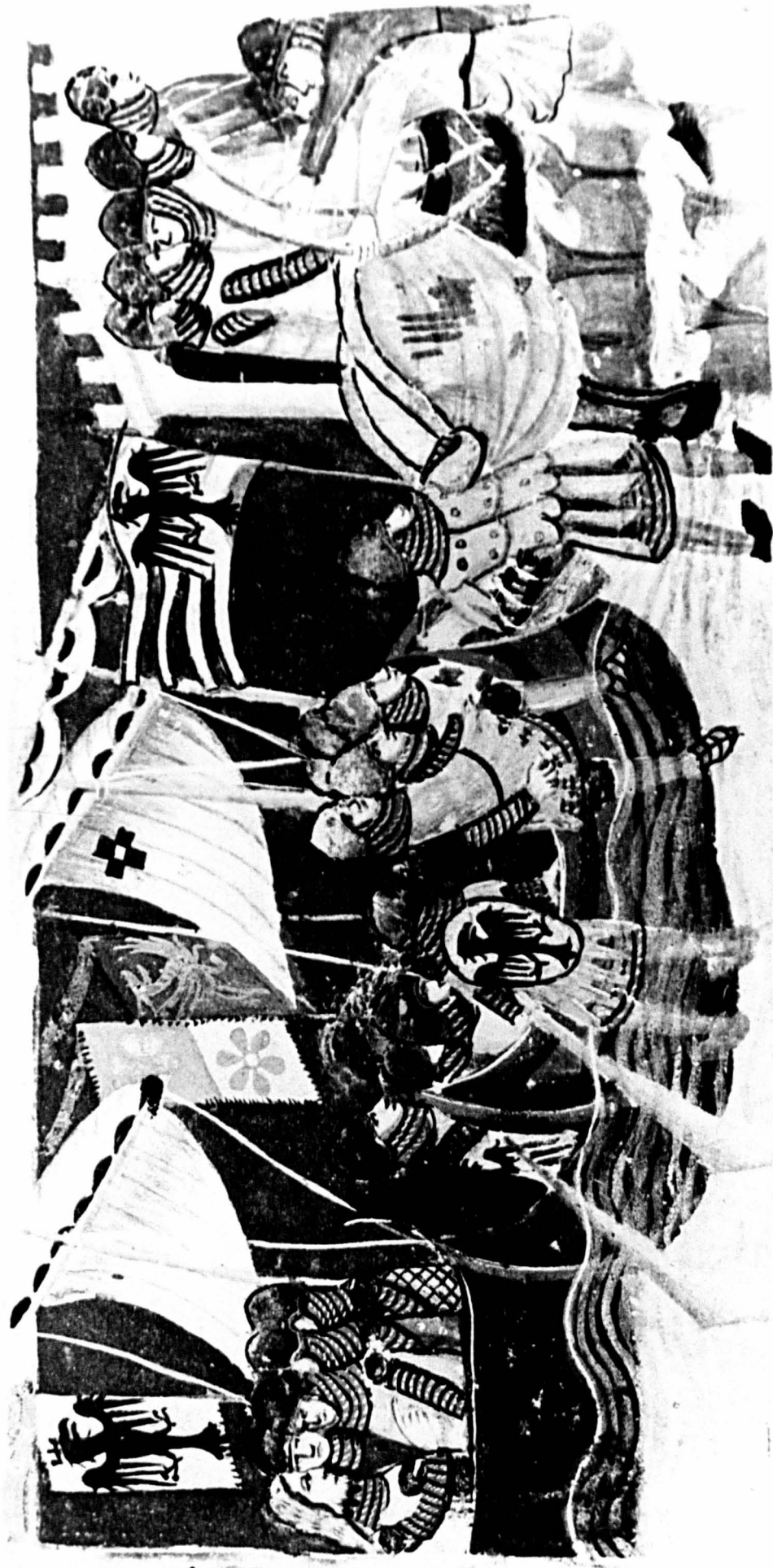
The military and financial burdens of defence were felt by many Englishmen both in the coastal shires and in inland shires. For many, they were a permanent source of grievance, and were a central political issue in and out of parliament throughout the period.

Frontispiece

English bowmen oppose the landing of ship-borne invaders (Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, MS. Marc. fr. Z. III (=224)('Li Livres des Roumans: Histoire de Iulius Cesar')).

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used throughout this work; full reference will be found in the Bibliography. Full detail of other works cited in footnotes by short title only will also be found in the Bibliography.

Add. MS.	Additional Manuscript
A.N.	Archives Nationales, Paris
<u>Arch. Camb.</u>	<u>Archaeologia Cambrensis</u>
Arch. Dép.	Archives Départementales
<u>Baker</u>	<u>Chronicon Galfridi le Baker de Swynbroke,</u> ed. E. M. Thompson (Oxford, 1889)
<u>B.É.C.</u>	<u>Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes</u>
<u>B.I.H.R.</u>	<u>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical</u> <u>Research</u>
B.L.	British Library (formerly British Museum), London
B.N.	Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
<u>Bull.</u>	<u>Bulletin</u>
<u>Cal.</u>	<u>Calendar</u>
<u>Cal. Letter Book -</u>	<u>Calendars of Letter Books of the City</u> <u>of London,</u> ed. R. Sharpe (London, 1899-1905)
<u>C.C.R.</u>	<u>Calendar of Close Rolls</u>
C.D.I.H.F.	Collection de Documents Inédits sur l'Histoire de France
<u>C.D.S.</u>	<u>Calendar of Documents relating to Scotland,</u> ed. J. Bain (5 vols., Edinburgh, 1881-8)
<u>C.F.R.</u>	<u>Calendar of Fine Rolls</u>
<u>Chronicon Anglie</u>	<u>Chronicon Anglie ab Anno Domini 1328 usque</u> <u>ad Annum 1338, Auctore Monacho quodam</u> <u>Sancti Albani,</u> ed. E. M. Thompson (R.S., 1874)

<u>C.I.M.</u>	<u>Calendar of Inquisitions, Miscellaneous</u>
<u>C.P.R.</u>	<u>Calendar of Patent Rolls</u>
<u>C.R.</u>	<u>Close Rolls</u>
<u>Dignity of a Peer</u>	<u>Reports from the Lords Committee touching the Dignity of a Peer of the Realm (5 vols., London, 1829)</u>
<u>Ec.H.R.</u>	<u>Economic History Review</u>
E.E.T.S.	Early English Text Society
<u>E.H.R.</u>	<u>English Historical Review</u>
E.H.S.	English Historical Society
<u>F.C.</u>	<u>Field Club</u>
<u>Foedera</u>	<u>Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae, etc., ed. T. Rymer</u>
<u>Froissart</u>	<u>Froissart, Oeuvres, Chroniques, ed. K. de Lettenhove (29 vols., Brussels, 1870-7).</u>
<u>Hemingburgh</u>	<u>Chronicon Walter de Hemingburgh, ed. H. C. Hamilton (E.H.S., London, 1848)</u>
<u>H.K.W.</u>	<u>R. A. Brown, H. M. Colvin, A. J. Taylor, The History of the King's Works: The Middle Ages (2 vols. and case of plans, London, 1963)</u>
H.M.C.	Historical Manuscripts Commission
H.M.S.O.	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
<u>H.T.</u>	<u>History Today</u>
<u>Knighton</u>	<u>Chronicon Henrici Knighton, ed. J. R. Lumby (2 vols., R.S., 1889-95)</u>
<u>Lanercost Chron.</u>	<u>Chronicon de Lanercost, 1201-1346, ed. J. Stevenson (Glasgow, 1839)</u>
M.E.	Middle English
<u>M.M.</u>	<u>The Mariner's Mirror</u>
MS. fr.	Manuscrit français
<u>Murimuth</u>	<u>Chronica Adae Murimuth et Roberti de Avesbury, ed. E. M. Thompson (R.S., 1889)</u>
n. acq. fr.	nouvelles acquisitions françaises

<u>Parl. Writs</u>	<u>Parliamentary Writs and Writs of Military Summons</u> , ed. F. Palgrave (2 vols., R.C., 1827-34)
<u>P. & P.</u>	<u>Past and Present</u>
<u>P.P.C.</u>	<u>Proceedings and Ordinances of the Privy Council of England</u> , ed. N. H. Nicolas (7 vols., R.C., 1834-7)
<u>P.R.</u>	<u>Patent Rolls</u>
P.R.O.	Public Record Office, London
<u>Proc.</u>	<u>Proceedings</u>
R.C.	Record Commission
<u>Religieux de Saint-Denys</u>	<u>Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys</u> , ed. L. Bellaguet (6 vols., C.D.I.H.F., 1839-52)
<u>Rept.</u>	<u>Report</u>
<u>Rept. D.K.R.</u>	<u>Reports of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records</u>
R.Hist.S.	Royal Historical Society
R.O.	Record Office
<u>Rot. Parl.</u>	<u>Rotuli Parliamentorum</u> , vols. ii, iii (1783)
<u>Rot. Scot.</u>	<u>Rotuli Scotiae</u> , ed. D. Macpherson <u>et al.</u> (2 vols., R.C., 1814-19)
R.S.	Rolls Series
Secousse	<u>Ordonnances des Rois de France de la Troisième Race</u> , ed. D. Secousse (Paris, 1734-50), vols. iv-viii.
S.H.F.	Société de l'Histoire de France
Soc.	Société, Society
<u>Stats. Realm</u>	<u>Statutes of the Realm</u> , ed. A. Luders <u>et al.</u> (11 vols., R.C., 1810-28)
Stubbs, <u>Select Charters</u>	<u>Select Charters and other Illustrations of English Constitutional History from earliest Times to the Reign of Edward I</u> , ed. W. Stubbs (Oxford, 1913)
<u>Trans.</u>	<u>Transactions</u>
<u>Trans. Cymmrodorion</u>	<u>Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion</u>

T.R.Hist.S.

Transactions of the Royal Historical Society

Walsingham, Hist. Ang. Thomae Walsingham Historia Anglicana,
ed. H. T. Riley (2 vols., R.S., 1863-4)

Walsingham, Ypod. Neust. Ypodigma Neustriae, a Thoma
Walsingham, etc., ed. H. T. Riley (R.S.,
1876)

V.C.H.

Victoria County History

Abbreviations of the names of counties are those recommended in R.F.
Hunnisett, Indexing for Editors (British Records Association, 1972).

GLOSSARY OF ARMS AND ARMOUR

- AVENTAIL** Mail defence for neck, throat, and chin and falling to the shoulders. Usually pendant from a bascinet (q.v.), and fastened to it with leather laces or staples. Also called a CAMAIL.
- AKETON** A short, sometimes sleeveless, padded or quilted tunic worn under the hauberk (q.v.) by knights. Often the only body protection for infantry. Akin to the GAMBESON (q.v.).
- BACULUS** A staff weapon, often no more than a plain stave serving as a weapon.
- BASCINET** A light headpiece, usually egg-shaped or globular, often fitted with a pointed visor and mail aventail (q.v.).
- BALDRIC**
(baudre) Belt with a hook attached for spanning crossbows (q.v.).
- BILL** Staff weapon with long cutting-head usually fashioned to include a spike, and with a curved cutting hook in front, balanced by a short spike at the back. Derived from the similarly-named agricultural implement.
- BRACIA** Armour defence for the arms and shoulder. See REREBRACE and VAMBRACE.
- CHAPEL-DE-FER** Type of helmet with a broad brim, resembling an upturned cauldron, hence its other name of KETTLE-HAT. Also WAR-HAT.
- COUSTEL, COUDEL,**
CULTELLUS A knife. Often a domestic implement doubling as a weapon.
- COUTER** Piece of armour of plate or cuirbouilli (q.v.) for protecting the elbow.

CROSSBOW	A bow in which the bow itself is mounted at right angles upon a stock so that it may be discharged from the shoulder. The weapon was spanned by several methods, including the use of a hook attached to the belt of the crossbowman (see BALDRIC) or by means of a mechanical windlass or cranequin (<u>arbaleste a tour</u>).
CUIRASS	Body armour of plate or <u>cuirbouilli</u> (q.v.), protecting the chest and back. Also called a PAIR OF PLATES.
<u>CUIRBOUILLI</u>	Leather boiled in oil to harden it.
GAMBESON	A linen garment padded with tow, usually longer than an aketon (q.v.). Often the only body defence of infantry.
GISARME	A staff weapon resembling a bill (q.v.)
GLAIVE	A cutting and stabbing staff weapon, which resembled a scythe blade mounted on a shaft of about five feet in length.
GORGET	Plate defence for throat and neck.
HALBERD	A staff weapon with an axe-like head, surmounted by a spike, and backed with a rearward-pointing spike.
HAUBERK, HAUBERGEON	A shirt or coat of mail. Some texts suggest that the haubergeon was a smaller variety of hauberk, although the terms were often synonymous.
<u>PAUNCE DE MAYLE</u>	Mail protection for the abdomen. See HAUBERK.
PAVISE (<u>pavois</u>)	A large, wooden, often hide-covered shield used for the protection of archers and crossbowmen. Often equipped with a prop at the back by which it could stand independently.
PIKE	Infantry spear with a small diamond-shaped or leaf-shaped head mounted on a staff of up to eighteen feet in length.

PIZAINÉ (<u>pisan</u>)	The exact connotation is not clear, but it appears variously to have been armour for the neck or chest.
POLEAXE	A staff weapon, spiked at both ends of the shaft for thrusting, its head consisting of an axe-head and a hammer-head back to back.
POURPOINT	A doublet of defence of canvas or leather, studded on the outside with rivets. The term also sometimes refers to protection of this construction for the thighs.
QUARREL (<u>carreau</u> , <u>garot</u>)	A short arrow or bolt for use with a crossbow (<u>q.v.</u>). Larger versions, often feathered with latten, were used with springalds (<u>q.v.</u>)
REREBRACE (<u>rerebras</u>)	Armour for the upper arm and shoulder.
<u>SECURA</u>	A battleaxe.
<u>SPARTHA</u>	The Irish Axe or Sparth. A war-axe derived from the 'bearded' Danish axe, characterized by an elongated upper horn to the blade, or sometimes with a crescentic blade.
SPRINGALD	A large weapon of the crossbow (<u>q.v.</u>) type, operated from a fixed mounting.
VAMBRANCE (<u>waumbras</u>)	Armour for the lower arm.
WYAXE	A form of battleaxe, the exact connotation of which is not clear. The prefix, <u>wy</u> , is possibly derived from M.E. <u>wye</u> ('soldier', 'fighting man'), and was thus used in the sense of differentiating a 'soldier's axe' from an agricultural axe. Alternatively, the prefix possibly denotes the original place of manufacture (?Wye).
<u>WYSPILIO</u> ,	A mace comprising a short staff with a spiked metal ball attached to it by a length of chain. Also called a MACE AND CHAIN. Variations of this weapon were possibly derived from the agricultural flail.
<u>VISPILIO</u>	

INTRODUCTION

Between 1337 and 1389, England was almost continually involved in war with France, Scotland, Castile, and other continental powers. Punctuated by sporadic truces, the longest-lasting of which was the peace of Brétigny from 1360-9, and terminated by the truce of Leulinghen in 1389, this fourteenth-century phase of the Hundred Years' War witnessed the fluctuating fortunes of the two principal belligerents in the struggle. The decade of formal peace between England and France from 1360 to 1369 conveniently marks an interlude between the distinct periods of war, the first of which, from 1337 to 1360, witnessed the apogée of English hopes and expectations, reflected in their numerous military successes; the twenty years following the renewal of war in 1369 told a different tale. Plagued with domestic, economic, and political troubles, and, from 1377, having the problem of a child on the throne, the English had to contend with a France rejuvenated by the extensive military and economic reforms of the 1360s. Although in the period after 1360 English military involvement in France was more intense than ever before, this involvement was rewarded by a noticeable lack of military 'success'.

Throughout the whole of the fourteenth-century phase of the war, the greater part of actual hostilities took place in the territories of England's enemies. Apart from the northernmost

shires of England, which were frequently subjected to Scottish raids, few other areas of the country were to experience at first hand the hazards, hardships, and terrors of war which, for the unfortunate inhabitants of many parts of France, were a regular occurrence. Although in 1385 a French army under Jean de Vienne ravaged the north of England in conjunction with the Scots, this was the only occasion during the fourteenth century on which a large French force was to do so.¹ Even then, the presence of this army in England was not permanent, remaining with the Scots only from June to September, when it re-embarked for the continent. These mere three months or so pale into insignificance when compared to the fact that English troops, if only in garrisons, were present in France throughout the whole of the period under consideration. The greater part of actual hostilities was thus fought in France and on the continent.

Throughout the period, the principal means of retaliation available to the French -- 'of carrying the war to the English' -- were attacks upon the English coasts and on shipping. Between the two terminal dates of this study (and even beyond them), few inhabitants of the English coastal shires did not fear the destruction of their chattels and property, and even for their lives, through the attacks of ship-borne raiders of France, Normandy, Castile, and their allies. Even before 1337, the coasts had suffered from the naval attacks of the Scots. The commencement of formal war between England and France in 1337 added the weight of French naval resources to the impact of these raids. To counter such attacks, there came into operation a complex defence system,

1. See Ch. III.

which had gradually evolved over the preceding two centuries to meet an increasing need for defence caused by threats of attack or invasion from abroad. Following the loss of Angevin lands in northern France in 1204, attacks from the continent became an increasing possibility, and threats of invasion recurred throughout the thirteenth century. The threats of the years 1295 and 1324-6, and the Scottish attacks of the early 1330s had been immediate forerunners to the raids which became more frequent from 1337 onwards. Even in periods of peace, the coasts often had to contend with the attacks of pirates and privateers. Consequently, the system for the defence of the coasts during the Hundred Years' War was not an innovation introduced after 1337 to meet an increasing need for defence. But while this defensive system did not change its basic traditional form, it was subjected to constant minor changes and experimentation during the fifty-two year period covered by this study, in response to the incessant needs of war.

For the defence of the coasts, basic reliance was placed upon the local levies of the maritime shires, who performed their customary military obligation to defend hearth and home on the garde de la mer, or keeping of the coasts. While it was necessary for the crown to have a potential force which could be called upon to guard the coasts when necessary, the question of national defence involved far more than the mere physical protection of the coastline. The crown needed, if possible, to know of the enemy's intentions so that defensive measures could be implemented in good time. Thus a reliable intelligence network was needed, which employed agents in enemy territory. Then, once a warning had been received, it was necessary to have good methods of

communication to place the defenders on the alert, and to have a system of fire-signals to warn them when the enemy was actually sighted, and the attack was imminent.

Within the realm itself, it was essential to look to internal security to prevent leakage of information to the enemy and the infiltration of undesirables into the country. Thus stringent controls were implemented, chiefly at the ports, and other vigilant measures taken for the apprehension of enemy agents. Since enemy attacks came by sea, ships and men to fight in them were also needed for the protection of the coasts, of friendly shipping and trade, and to combat the enemy at sea. Indeed, whenever danger threatened, a large number of defensive measures was put into operation, and these measures will be discussed more fully in the body of the thesis.

The French war of the fourteenth century severely put the English defensive organization to the test. With the exception of the 1360s, every decade from the 1330s to the 1380s saw, to a greater or lesser extent, the harassment of the English coasts by enemy raiders, who wreaked much havoc and spoliation. Although, in the main, these attacks were hit and run raids, there were several occasions in the late 1330s, the 1370s and 1380s when the English feared that their enemies would mount a full-scale invasion. The possibility of invasion by the French, which even as early as 1335 had led to widespread panic in government circles, became even more real after 1336. The fear became reinforced by the devastating raids on Portsmouth, Southampton, and other places. Although after 1340 the intensity of enemy attacks decreased, the threat remained, and Edward III could still prudently make arrangements for the defence of the realm in his absence in 1346,

and in 1359-60, while Edward campaigned in northern France, the French were able to reciprocate and raise panic in the coastal towns of England, as the widespread defensive measures taken in those years testify.

The treaty of Brétigny brought with it almost ten years of peace, although, for the defenders of the English coast, this was to be the calm before the storm. The 1370s and 1380s saw the renewal of attacks in far greater intensity than had been the case since the 1330s. In almost every year after 1369, the English coasts were pillaged or at least threatened by enemy raiders, while full-scale invasion was threatened in 1385-6.

Never the less, the extent of damage perpetrated by the French in their raids on the English coast -- however grave a cause for concern to the English authorities -- was minimal compared to the destruction caused in the same period by the English in France. The sacking of Winchelsea and the massacre of its inhabitants by the French in 1360, which aroused utmost horror in England, may at least be paralleled by the Black Prince's brutal sack of Limoges in 1370, and is insignificant when compared to the destruction wreaked by a single English chevauchée, such as those of Edward III in the Cambrésis and Thiérache in 1339.

The defence of the English coasts was thus very much a home front, removed from the principal theatre of war. In consequence, the writings of contemporary chroniclers emphasize the events of the war in France, and only mention home defence in passing. French chroniclers dwelt upon the desolation and misery which, because of the war, was the lot of many parts of France, while English chroniclers naturally concentrated on the deeds of the English in France. Although many chroniclers, both English and

French, indeed make reference to French attacks upon England, these descriptions form by far the lesser part of their narratives. It is, therefore, no small wonder that modern English historians, following the lead given in the chronicles, have chiefly tended to concentrate on the war in France. It is telling indeed that few of the standard general histories of the period make more than passing reference to the question of home defence in England.¹

In contrast, the works of many French historians contain accounts of the French raids upon England. R. Delachenal's Histoire de Charles V (5 vols., Paris, 1909-31), H. P. A. Terrier de Loray's Jean de Vienne, Amiral de France (Paris, 1877), and Calmette and Déprez's La France et l'Angleterre en Conflit (Paris, 1937), for example, all deal in detail with various offensives against England, as do the first two volumes of C. de la Roncière's Histoire de la Marine Française (6 vols., Paris, 1899-1934). A number of interesting articles also treat with aspects of offensives launched by the French against England, and these include S. Luce's discourse on French preparations before the battle of Sluys,² and L. Mirot's 'Une Tentative d'Invasion en Angleterre pendant la Guerre de Cent Ans'³. Works such as de la Roncière's mentioned above, and those of Beaurepaire, Lafaye,⁴

1. E.g., M. McKisack, The Fourteenth Century (Oxford, 1959); E. Perroy, The Hundred Years War, trans. W. B. Wells (London, 1951).

2. Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie, xiii (1883-5), 3-41.

3. Revue des Études Historiques, lxxxix (1915), 249-87, 417-66.

4. C. de Beaurepaire, 'Recherche sur l'Ancien Clos des Galées', Précis de l'Académie des Travaux, Sciences, Belles-Lettres, et Arts de Rouen (Rouen, 1863-4); O. de Lafaye, Le Clos des Galées de Rouen (Rouen, 1877).

and others on the Clos des Galées have done much to illustrate French naval organization, while P. Contamine's Guerre, État et Société à la Fin du Moyen Âge (Paris/The Hague, 1972), is now the basic work on French military organization.

In recent years interest in the defence of England, and in the role played by those people who stayed behind while the armies went to France, has increased. In 1966, Dr. Hewitt laid a milestone in the development of the study of this aspect of the French war in his remarkable work, The Organization of War under Edward III, 1338-62 (Manchester, 1966), although some of his conclusions need qualification. Since then, a small number of articles and works on aspects of home defence have appeared, among them, works by Freeman, and Searle and Burghart.¹ Recent general works on the period, moreover, also acknowledge the importance of defence in fourteenth-century England.² Certain other topics allied to the question of home defence in its wider context have also received treatment: the obligation to military service has been admirably dealt with by Professor M. R. Powicke in Military Obligation in Medieval England. A Study in Liberty and Duty (Oxford, 1962); the works of writers such as Kepler and Richmond have done much to illustrate the naval organization of the period³; the role of non-combatants in the war, and the

1. A. Z. Freeman, 'A Moat Defensive: the Coast Defense Scheme of 1295', Speculum, xlii (1967), 442-62; E. Searle and R. Burghart, 'The Defense of England and the Peasants' Revolt', Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies, iii (1972), 365-87.

2. E.g., K. A. Fowler, The Age of Plantagenet and Valois (London, 1967); The Hundred Years' War, ed. K. A. Fowler (London, 1971).

3. J. S. Kepler, 'The Effects of the Battle of Sluys upon the Administration of English Naval Impressment, 1340-3', Speculum, xlviii (1973), 70-7; C. F. Richmond, 'The Keeping of the Seas during the Hundred Years' War 1422-40', History, xliv (1964), 283-98; --, 'The War at Sea', The Hundred Years' War, ed. Fowler, pp. 96-121; etc.

burdens of defence upon Englishmen have been carefully examined.¹

But whereas the appearance of such works is gradually increasing our knowledge of the subject of defence, there still remains no connected account of the English defensive system as a whole during the fourteenth century, or, indeed, for the Middle Ages in general. Furthermore, whereas much light has been shed on certain aspects of the subject of defence, many others have received scant attention from historians. For example, little has been written on the subject of medieval intelligence systems, although it is certain, both from the works of contemporary chroniclers and from official records, that espionage played an important role in medieval warfare, and not just for defensive purposes. Our knowledge of the beacon system in the Middle Ages also has many gaps which need to be filled, although, for the fourteenth century, lack of documentary evidence cannot be blamed, as the various unpublished Chancery rolls contain frequent references to beacons. Nor have the details of the workings of the defensive system for the garde de la mer been closely examined, while many other aspects of defence have received only a rudimentary treatment. It is hoped that the present work will, to some extent, fill an existing gap.

While modern historians, until comparatively recently, have tended to neglect the subject of defence, this was not always the case. Antiquaries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

1. E.g., Hewitt, op. cit.; C. T. Allmand, 'The War and the Non-Combatant', The Hundred Years' War, ed. Fowler, pp. 163-83; Society at War. The Experience of England and France during the Hundred Years' War, ed. C. T. Allmand (Edinburgh, 1973); G. L. Harriss, King, Parliament and Public Finance in Medieval England to 1369 (Oxford, 1975); J. R. Maddicott, The English Peasantry and the Demands of the Crown, 1294-1341, P. & P. Supplement i (1975); etc.

recognized that defensive measures were a crucial part of military organization within the realm. For instance, in a volume of transcripts and original documents on thirteenth- and fourteenth-century military matters, compiled by the seventeenth-century antiquary, Sir Robert Cotton, a large section deals with defence of the sea-coasts, another with naval matters, while a third is entitled 'false rumours'.¹ Works such as those of Camden, Coke, and Lambarde in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and of Ward in the eighteenth, also touched upon the subject.² Such writers, living in centuries where there existed the possibility of attacks from abroad, variously by the Spaniards, Dutch, and French, were probably aware of the importance of national defence. In the nineteenth century, the tendency was for historians to concentrate upon the glory of past conquests, although the works of Clowes and Nicolas on the navy do, in fact, contain numerous references to defence.³

The interest of older historians in the subject is understandable from another point of view. There exists a large bulk of contemporary official documentation in national and local record repositories in England and France, which illustrates an aspect of the Hundred Years' War dealt with only fleetingly by

1. B.L., Cotton MS. Julius C. iv.

2. W. Camden, Britannia (London, 1594); E. Coke, Fourth Institutes (London, 1664); W. Lambarde, Perambulation of the County of Kent (London, 1576).

3. W. L. Clowes, The Royal Navy. A History from Earliest Times to the Present (7 vols., London, 1897-1903); N. H. Nicolas, A History of the Royal Navy from the earliest times to the Wars of the French Revolution (2 vols., London, 1847).

the chroniclers. The amount of extant primary source material justifies research into the subject of defence.

The main aim of this thesis is to examine the problems caused by the need for defence, and to describe and analyse the defensive system in England between 1337 and 1389. The thesis falls into two parts, the first of which is a chronological account of the defensive situation between the two terminal dates. The second part examines closely the various aspects of defence and its organization, attempts to show how effective it was, and investigates its effects upon contemporary Englishmen.

It is hoped that the chronological account will help to place the question of defence in its true perspective, and will give some indication of the extent of the enemy threat, which varied in intensity from time to time. That the intensity of such a threat varied was not solely due to the efficiency of the English defensive deterrent, but was also influenced by a number of external factors, the chief of which was the general course of the war overseas. Treating the question of defence chronologically also enables one to contrast the defensive involvement of the 1340s and 1350s, years which were relatively quiet, with that of the late 1330s and of the 1370s and 1380s, when the English defensive resources were often stretched to the limit. A 'blow by blow' account was thus deemed essential for these reasons and for many others.

Within the period of this study, the threat to the realm came not just from the continent, but also from other quarters. Scottish attacks in the north of England were an important part of Franco-Scottish strategy, and, in consequence, the defence

of the northern shires was no less important than the defence of the coasts. To have included the defence of the north within the scope of this work, however, would have greatly enlarged it. The topic, which, indeed, is a subject on its own, has also been dealt with by many other writers,¹ thus throughout this thesis it is only touched upon where necessary.

The other area which presented a threat to the realm was Wales, although historians have tended to minimize or deny the existence of a Welsh threat between the close of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth. This thesis hopes to show that internal discontent in Wales during the fourteenth century made that country a very real threat to security, and that this fact was recognized by the English authorities, who took stringent measures to counter it.

It is hoped that a close investigation of the roles played by defensive officials and the troops serving under them will give a clearer picture of the system of defence within the coastal shires. By such an investigation, one can see that the system of defence, although, in its broad framework, based on long tradition, was subjected to regular minor changes throughout the period. Probably through the stimulus of prolonged war, changes took place, for instance, in the roles played by defensive officials and in the arrangement of groupings of inland counties with maritime ones for coastal defence, while the arms borne by the defenders varied in quality from area to area. These aspects of

1. E.g., E. Miller, War in the North (Hull, 1960); R. Nicholson, Edward III and the Scots. The Formative Years of a Military Career, 1327-35 (Oxford, 1965).

the defensive system, and many others, have never before been investigated in great depth.

From an investigation of the personnel involved in defence and the main outline of the defensive system, one is naturally led to an examination of the component parts of the defensive system. The beacon, as a means of transmitting warnings, played an important role in the fourteenth-century English defence system. Despite the abundance of source material, the subject of fourteenth-century beacons is one which has been neglected by historians. It is clear that the beacon had been known for centuries, and that during the fourteenth century, under the constant threat to the realm, its use was redefined.

Fixed fortifications also had an important function in the defence of the realm. Under the stress of enemy threat, the period witnessed great building activity, particularly in coastal towns, which were the natural targets for enemy hit and run raids. In times of danger, the building programme escalated in the areas menaced. Constructional works in fortifications also reflected the fears of the times: the building of new castles, such as Queenborough, Cooling, and Bodiam from the 1360s onwards underlined the reaction to the enemy threat, while in the 1370s and 1380s, the strengthening of castles several miles inland from the south coast may well have been undertaken through fear of invasion. Temporary defences were utilized in coastal areas, and these have also been investigated.

Because the enemy raiders came by sea, naval defence was as important as defence on land. Although the success of enemy raids was frequently attributed to the lack of adequate naval

defence, and although the crown did, from time to time, attempt to solve the problem of defence at sea, it is clear that no naval force could completely prevent raids taking place nor could it have prevented an invasion should that have occurred. In the fourteenth-century naval war, the advantages manifestly lay with the attackers.

For this reason, it was essential for the English authorities to have, if possible, prior warning of the enemy's intentions. Intelligence therefore played an important role in the defence of the realm. In spite of this, and of the fact that internal security against enemy espionage was a major preoccupation of the English authorities, very little work on this aspect of fourteenth-century warfare has appeared in print.

An examination of intelligence systems naturally leads to a study of the English possessions overseas, which were important as bases for intelligence activities, and also, on the admission of the crown, served as the first line of defence for England herself. This study investigates the role played by the 'barbicans', but the conclusion arrived at is that they could never be completely successful from the defensive point of view while the enemy had access to the Channel coast. They never the less were a thorn in the side of the French.

The fifty-two years covered by this study were burdensome ones for the defenders of the coast. The onus of the obligation to military service in defence of the realm, often for prolonged periods, fell heaviest upon the inhabitants of the maritime shires, although men of the inland counties were also affected. Further-reaching were the crown's demands for finance for defence

and for the prosecution of the war in general, which touched upon most sections of the community, and which were a central political issue in and out of parliament during the period. To these burdens were added for the dwellers in the coastal shires the possibility of loss of property and life through the effects of enemy raids.

In the preparation of this thesis, much reliance has been placed upon the published Calendars of Chancery Rolls, the Rolls of Parliament, and collections of printed documents such as Rymer's Foedera. Printed editions of many contemporary chronicles were also consulted. While normally only the lesser part of the chroniclers' narratives was found to be relevant to defence, they are important in that they often give descriptions of enemy attacks, and also give some indication of where and when attacks took place.

Unpublished documentary sources have been consulted in national and local repositories in England and France. The English records were mainly used to shed light upon English involvement in home defence and the workings of the defensive system; the French records were consulted with a view to discerning French attitudes towards offensives against England, and to investigate French preparations for naval attacks upon England.

The most fruitful source of documentation on the English defensive system was the Public Record Office, where extensive research was carried out, mainly in the records of Chancery and the Exchequer. The Gascon Rolls and Treaty Rolls proved a valuable source for the investigation of the defensive officials and organization of defence in the maritime counties, of the beacon

system, and of naval defence. Widespread use was made of the records of the Exchequer. Particularly valuable were the Issue Rolls and Rolls of Foreign Accounts, which gave information on a wide variety of subjects, including expenditure on fortifications, supplies of arms, naval expenditure, expenditure on garrisons of fortresses on the coast and in France, and payments to messengers and spies. Equally important was the bundle of Exchequer Miscellanea dealing with Army, Navy, and Ordinance. The muster rolls contained in this bundle were of crucial importance to the understanding of the organization of defence at its lowest levels, while the bundle also contained important material on garrisons, fortifications, and naval affairs.

The British Library (formerly British Museum) was not so extensively used as the Public Record Office, although important material was found there, chiefly in the Cotton MSS. and Additional MSS. Cotton MS. Julius C. iv was of especial value, since the original documents and transcripts contained in it are roughly arranged in subject order, and many conveniently illustrate aspects of national defence.

Many local repositories in England contained material of importance, much of it hitherto unknown. The completeness of holdings of relevant material naturally varied from place to place, but the widest collections were found in the Exeter Record Office and Winchester Record Office. In both cities, account rolls have survived from the fourteenth century, and these gave valuable information on expenditure upon municipal fortifications, weapons, local defensive forces, and other matters relating to local defence. Other record offices, such as the Greater London Record Office, contained individual or small numbers of

contemporary muster rolls, which were valuable sources for the study of the organization of defence within the local community.

The National Register of Archives at Quality Court, Chancery Lane, London, WC2A 1HP, was a useful guide to the holdings of relevant material in the various local repositories. The subject index, under such headings as 'France', 'militia', 'national defence', did give some indication of where relevant material was to be found, but the only efficient way of locating material on the subject was to work through the Register's lists of the collections of records housed in local repositories chiefly in coastal areas, in the hope that they might contain something of relevance.

Among French sources, the MSS. français in the Bibliothèque Nationale proved the most fruitful source, containing much important material on French naval preparations for attacks upon England, and numerous references were made to the Clos de Galées. This fonds also contained much material on other aspects of French military involvement, especially in the border regions around the English 'barbicans' in France. This collection was complemented by the material contained in MSS. Clairambault and nouvelles acquisitions françaises.

Although extensive research was carried out at the Archives Nationales, the collections there were not as rich in relevant material as those of the Bibliothèque Nationale. The layettes concerning England and the Registres de la Chancellerie, both in the Trésor des Chartes, together with the Monuments Historiques, did, however, contain important material on French naval preparations, military affairs, and espionage. The Archives de la Marine, which are deposited in the Archives Nationales, contained

information on galleys and other naval matters.

Many French local repositories contained rich sources of documentation. The Fonds Danquin and the Registres du Tabellionage de Rouen at the Archives Départementales de la Seine-Maritime, were especially rewarding sources for French naval preparations, and were complemented by the Fonds Martainville and miscellaneous MS. at the Bibliothèque Municipale at Rouen. The série A at the Archives Départementales du Pas-de-Calais and the série B at the Archives Départementales du Nord, both of which were extensively consulted, produced much useful material on French preparations for attacks upon England, 'border warfare' on the Calais March, and espionage. The série B at the Archives du Nord was also a valuable source for the French preparations for the invasion attempts of 1385-6.

PART ONE

ATTACK AND DEFENCE, 1337-89

CHAPTER ONE

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE WAR, 1337-60

In March 1338, a fleet of French and Norman galleys descended upon the ill-defended English town of Portsmouth and severely burned it. Later, in October of that year, an even more serious attack was made upon Southampton, and by the end of the year, a host of towns along the south coast -- among them Plymouth, Swanage, Portsea, and Eastdean -- had suffered some damage through enemy action. Moreover, the Isle of Wight had been ravaged and the Channel Islands lost to the French and their allies.¹

These attacks represented a concerted effort of French military strategy and presaged the horrors which were to plague the English coasts in the years to come. None the less, the attacks of 1338 were not a new terror unleashed upon the unsuspecting populace of the English coastal shires. To many they must have appeared as a continuation of the naval war which had been

1. Evidence for these attacks is found in the writings of contemporary chroniclers, including Baker, pp. 62-3; Hemingburgh, ii. 315; Knighton, ii. 3-7; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 200, and is also reflected in official records, e.g., C.P.R., 1338-40, pp. 88, 162, 177, 180-1; Foedera, II. ii. 975, 1067.

sporadic since at least the closing years of the thirteenth century. Piracy on the seas was the normal state of affairs during peace time and attacks on English shipping, whether by vessels of Scotland, France or Flanders -- attacks which were avenged in full by the atrocities committed by English seamen -- were but a short step removed from acts of war in times of formal hostilities.¹ Since the 1290s there had indeed been several opportunities for warlike deeds at sea. One of the principal occasions had been between 1324 and 1326, when invasion had been threatened, first by the French during the war of Saint-Sardos, and then by the followers of the exiled queen, Isabella. Furthermore, during the preceding century defensive measures had been necessitated on several occasions. The loss of the Angevin lands in the north of France in 1204 had increased the possibility of attack from the continent.² Indeed, from 1205 onwards threats of invasion and actual invasion attempts occurred on numerous occasions, principally in 1213, 1242, 1264, and 1295. In the long term, then, the inhabitants of the coastal shires of England had become accustomed to the possibility that they could be attacked by enemy raiders.

1. Piracy had always been a problem, especially when the pirates were English. In the thirteenth century, special keepers had been appointed to guard the coasts of Devon against the raids of William Marsh from his base in Lundy Island (C.P.R., 1232-47, pp. 292, 268). In the fourteenth century the problem remained: the enmity between the Cinque Ports and Greath Yarmouth is well known, while perhaps the most extreme example was the attack on Southampton by the men of Winchelsea in September 1321 (C.C.R., 1318-23, pp. 486, 490; Foedera, II. i. 456; Rot. Parl., ii. 413).

2. English possession of lands in northern France had meant that a long stretch of coastline was denied to an invader who wished to launch attacks from its ports upon England. It is significant that the first serious invasion threat against England since the Norman Conquest occurred in the year after the loss of Normandy.

More immediately, however, the attacks of 1338 must have appeared as an escalation of the attacks of Scottish sea-raiders, which had been prevalent since the early 1330s. Edward III's involvement in the affairs of Scotland from 1327 to 1336 had seen sea-power playing an important role in the war from both the English and Scottish viewpoints. English naval forces in this period had had the three-fold role of transporting troops and supplies to Scotland, blockading the Scottish ports, and preventing an invasion of England by sea.¹ For the Scots, naval war took the form of attacks upon English shipping at sea and raids on the English coast, both aimed at disrupting the English war effort by distracting troops and ships from Scotland and tying them down in home defence. It is uncertain whether such tactics were part of a concerted Scottish naval policy, but nevertheless, the periods of the most intense Scottish naval activity coincided with large-scale English campaigns in Scotland. While Edward III was besieging Berwick in 1334, the whole of the east and south coasts of England were alerted against Scottish vessels which were at sea,² and during the Roxburgh campaign later in the same year, Scottish ships descended upon East Anglia.³ In the following year, while Edward was campaigning in Scotland, there were fears in England that the Scots, with French aid, would descend upon the coasts, and this provoked great defensive activity in the

1. See R. Nicholson, Edward III and the Scots. The Formative Years of a Military Career, 1327-1335 (Oxford, 1965), p. 198. The use of the navy as a supporting force for armies in the field had featured prominently in Edward I's Welsh campaigns, and was utilized to the utmost by his grandson. See Nicholson, op. cit., passim; W. S. Reid, 'Sea-Power in the Anglo-Scottish War, 1296-1328', M.M., xlvi (1960), 7-23. On the possible origin of such tactics, see D. Seward, The Monks of War (London, 1972), p. 86.

2. Rot. Scot., i. 249-53; Foedera, II. ii. 862.

3. Rot. Scot., i. 299.

maritime areas of England and Wales.¹ Even the Channel Islands were alerted, although they were not actually attacked until 1336.²

The threat of Scottish attacks persisted throughout 1336, and was strengthened by fears that the French -- although they were not yet officially at war with England -- would assist the Scots in an invasion of England. Such fears were given firm grounds by the Franco-Scottish negotiations of 1335-6 and by the transfer of the French Mediterranean fleet to Norman ports in the summer of 1336.³ The extent of the fear current in England is perhaps reflected in the works of one chronicler who mistakenly wrote that the French and Scots burned Southampton in 1335.⁴ Not surprisingly, fear in England led to an increase in defensive measures during 1336: defensive officials known as the keepers of the maritime lands were appointed by the crown in several English coastal shires and in Wales in October and November;⁵ defence at sea was provided for by the equipping of squadrons to search for the enemy, activity becoming marked in August;⁶ towns and fortresses in coastal areas were repaired and fortified;⁷

1. For example, keepers of the maritime lands were appointed in South Wales in July 1335 to counter the Scots and their confederates (P.R.O., E. 101/612/34, m.1. See also Nicholson, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-11).

2. C.P.R., 1334-8, p. 208; Foedera, II. ii. 919.

3. E. Perroy, The Hundred Years' War, trans. W. B. Wells (London, 1951), pp. 188-91.

4. Lanercost Chron., p. 283.

5. P.R.O., E.101/19/3, 13; E. 101/612/34; C.C.R., 1333-7, pp. 715, 723; Parl. Writs, II. ii. 660.

6. C.P.R., 1334-8, p. 271; C.C.R., 1333-7, pp. 544, 572, 573, 593, 598, 606-7, 658, 693.

7. E.g., C.P.R., 1334-8, p. 240 (Southampton); C.C.R., 1333-7, pp. 553 (Gloucester), 556 (Windsor), 591 (Portchester), 601 (Pevensey), 616 (Aberystwyth).

supplies of arms were gathered in large quantities;¹ and advice on the defensive situation was sought in parliament.² In December, it was made clear that the measures were being taken for the defence of the realm against the French, who, it was feared, were planning to invade England on their ally's behalf.³ Such measures were not taken for naught: the Scots were particularly active, raiding the Channel Islands, attacking shipping off the Isle of Wight, and making the occasional landfall in England itself.⁴ But despite current rumours and fears, and despite English statements that their defensive measures were taken with the French threat in mind, it appears that prior to 1337 French naval aggression was confined to quasi-piratical attacks on English shipping at sea, and that the first authenticated French attacks on the English coast did not occur until the early months of 1338.

None the less, the danger of attack was ever present. If 1336 had witnessed much defensive activity, 1337 was to see even greater involvement. In March, Bayonne was asked on two occasions to provide ships to aid the king against the Franco-Scottish fleet.⁵ In May, Thomas de Ferrers, the keeper of the Channel Islands, was ordered to array the inhabitants for defence, since

1. C.P.R., 1334-8, pp. 256, 273, 274; C.C.R., 1333-7, pp. 586, 589, 599, 619, 622.

2. C.C.R., 1333-7, p. 702.

3. Foedera, II. ii. 944. The combined Franco-Scottish menace was very real. Edward III, requesting the officials of Bayonne to supply him with ships, mentioned that a French fleet was lying off the Norman coast, ready to come to the aid of the Scots (*ibid.*, 946).

4. *Ibid.*, 953.

5. *Ibid.*, 962, 965.

Sark had been invaded by the Scots.¹ The vulnerability of the islands had been recognized during the closing months of 1336, and throughout 1337 troops and victuals were sent in large quantities from Southampton to swell the garrisons of the island.² For the safety of the realm itself numerous precautions were taken. In July, for instance, the Justices of North and South Wales were ordered to see to their defences, since the danger from the Scots and French was daily increasing,³ a sentiment which had already been expressed in the June parliament, summoned to discuss the defence of the realm against the Scots.⁴ Stockpiles of arms in the Tower of London and elsewhere continued to grow, with purchases of crossbows, armour, and bows and arrows being made,⁵ while concern for fortifications was reflected in grants of murage to coastal towns such as Boston and in repairs to fortresses such as the royal castles in Hampshire.⁶

With increased French involvement, 1338 witnessed an escalation of the naval war. Not only did the threat of attacks increase, but so did the number of actual attacks upon the coast. It is clear that from the early 1330s the inhabitants of the coastal shires had become accustomed to the burdens and to the possibility of attacks upon them because of the naval war with the Scots. The entry of the French into the naval war thus meant little change to such

1. C.P.R., 1334-8, p. 451; Foedera, II. ii. 969.

2. C.P.R., 1334-8, pp. 324, 337, 413, 536; C.C.R., 1333-7, pp. 586, 712.

3. P.R.O., C. 76/49, m.20.

4. Foedera, II. ii. 979.

5. E.g., C.P.R., 1334-8, pp. 402, 425, 508, 523, 524.

6. Ibid., pp. 414 (Boston), 429 (Hampshire castles).

people. The only significant result of French involvement was an increase in the incidence and severity of attacks, as reflected in the events of 1338 and of the succeeding years up to 1340, each of which told the same grim story. In March 1339, a force of eleven galleys attacked and burned Harwich.¹ In May, a Norman and Genoese fleet sailed with impunity along the south coast of England, and although they merely threatened coastal places in Hampshire and were daunted by the formidable defences of the Isle of Wight, they nevertheless caused great damage at Plymouth and Hastings. In the same period, minor damage was done in the Isle of Thanet, at Dover and at Folkestone, while fishing vessels were put to the torch in Devon and Cornwall.² In July, an enemy fleet of considerable proportions attacked the ports of Rye and Winchelsea.³

The year 1340 told a similar tale. Despite the failure of the French invasion fleet at the battle of Sluys in June, raids on the English coast were recommenced in August when French and Castilian raiders, having been repelled by the defenders of the Isle of Wight, sailed westwards and fell upon Teignmouth and Plymouth, wreaking much havoc at the former but being driven off by the defenders at the latter.⁴

1. Baker, p. 63; Murimuth, p. 88.

2. Baker, pp. 63-4; Knighton, ii. 9; Murimuth, pp. 88-9.

3. Knighton, ii. 9. Knighton set their numbers at thirty-two galleys, twenty large ships, and fifteen small ships. A probably exaggerated total, it does, however, suggest that the size of the enemy fleet was indeed large.

4. Baker, p. 70. The Castilian galleys in this fleet had been provided by Alphonso XI under the terms of the Franco-Castilian treaty of February 1337 (G. Daumet, Étude sur l'Alliance de la France et de la Castille aux XIV^e et XV^e Siècles (Paris, 1898), pp. 125-31).

The immediate consequence of intensified enemy activity was a corresponding increase in the level of defensive activity. The major preoccupation was with defence on land, and with the mobilization of local forces to counter any incursions. The fears prevalent in 1337 had ensured that such defensive forces were on the alert and mobilized,¹ and royal instructions during the first three months of 1338 ensured that the custody of maritime places was maintained.² None the less, despite the measures taken, the French had proved that it was still possible to inflict grave damage. Consequently, defensive measures were stepped up after the first attacks in March 1338. On 25 March, keepers of the maritime lands were appointed in each coastal county from Yorkshire to Gloucestershire 'ad custodienda et custodiri facienda omnes portus et litora maris in quibus naves applicant vel applicare poterunt, et omnem terram maritimam', while at the same time, arrayers, who were to be intendant to the keepers, were also appointed, to array all fencible men in the event of an enemy attack.³ In many cases, these appointments were supported by royal writs commanding the intendance to the keepers of all persons.⁴ As the summer campaigning season progressed, further, sterner measures were taken to counter the enemy threat. In July and August, commissioners were appointed to specified groups of counties to oversee the work of the arrayers within their county groupings,⁵ while at the same time joint commissions of the peace

1. E.g., P.R.O., C. 61/49, mm. 9, 17, 20, 21, 24, 26.

2. For instance, in February 1338, the abbot of Ramsey was ordered to provide for the custody of rivers and arms of the sea in the marshes of Ramsey, so that no other vessels entered there (C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 69).

3. P.R.O., C. 61/50, m. 7.

4. P.R.O., C. 61/50, m. 10.

5. C.P.R., 1334-8, pp. 134, 141-2, 149.

and of array were issued in maritime and inland shires.¹ The appointment of overseers to supervise the commissioners of array was an extraordinary step not usually taken, and the authorities must have regarded the situation as unusually critical for them to have undertaken such action.² Steps were also taken to ensure that the coastal areas were not denuded of fighting men or of the victuals needed to feed them, when purveyors of victuals and arrayers for overseas service were instructed not to take either from within twelve leagues of the sea.³ As a means of giving the warning of attacks, the preparation of beacons was ordered in writs of 15 August to the sheriffs of coastal shires, and in November it was ordered that in churches situated within seven leagues of the sea only one bell should ordinarily be rung, and that the ringing of all bells would take place only in the event of an enemy attack.⁴ Other steps included the strengthening of fortifications: in June, the abbot of Battle received a licence to crenellate his abbey;⁵ in July, the mayor and bailiffs of Lynn were appointed to the defence of their town;⁶ Bristol castle received substantial supplies in August;⁷ while stringent measures were taken for fortifying London.⁸ For the general security of the realm, the custody of alien priories was taken into the king's hands, those in the Isle of Wight being yielded

1. Ibid., pp. 135-9, 146, 148.

2. See p. 25 below.

3. Foedera, II. ii. 1025.

4. Ibid., 1055, 1066.

5. C.P.R., 1338-40, p.92.

6. Ibid., p. 110.

7. Ibid., p.118.

8. Memorials of London and London Life, ed. H. T. Riley (London, 1868), pp. 202-3.

up in July, while St. Michael's Mount was confiscated and, in view of its strong defensible position, garrisoned in June.¹

The extent of the defensive measures, coupled with constant repetitions in royal writs of phrases such as 'since the French have a great fleet at sea and have attacked various towns and places on the coast ... and they are now at sea in these parts', reflect the degree of concern in England. But despite such formidable measures, the French proved that they were still able to execute damaging raids upon the coast. The numerous attacks -- particularly the October attack upon Southampton, which provoked a serious inquiry into the conduct of its defenders² -- caused a feeling of great despair and insecurity which was reflected in the complaints of the commons, voiced in the first parliament of 1339,³ and also in the increased number of defensive measures during 1339 and 1340. Commissions of array for defence,⁴ royal orders prohibiting the evacuation of threatened coastal areas or commands to individuals to return to their lands in those areas became all too frequent.⁵ Impressment of ships and men for defence at sea and of supplies for the defenders continued.⁶ Since certain towns had been damaged, it was necessary to repair

1. C.P.R., 1338-40, pp. 117 (Isle of Wight), 99 (St. Michael's Mount).

2. On 13 October, Richard, earl of Arundel and two justices of the Common Bench were commissioned to investigate 'the disgraceful neglect of duty' shown when the galleys appeared (C.P.R., 1338-40, pp. 180-1).

3. Rot. Parl., ii. 104. The commons complained that 'pur ceo qe pur defaute d'une Navie sur mere ... la Navie de Fraunce ad fait moult de maux par meer et terre.'

4. C.P.R., 1338-40, pp. 154, 355-6; C.P.R., 1340-3, pp. 12, 94; P.R.O., E. 403/307, mm. 7, 8, 11, 16, 18, 24, 25, 27.

5. E.g., P.R.O., C. 76/15, m. 31; C.C.R., 1337-9, p. 540.

6. E.g., P.R.O., C. 76/15, mm. 10^v, 12, 31; C.P.R., 1340-3, p. 20.

them and to strengthen other towns lest they too suffered similar fates. At Southampton, measures were quickly taken to repair and strengthen the town.¹ At other places, concern varied: at Winchester, for example, the crown took a direct interest and a survey of the defences was made in October 1339 with a view to implementing repairs;² other towns such as Exeter received grants of murage to finance their fortifications.³ Coastal castles such as Carisbrooke and Pevensey were also strengthened.⁴

The naval war of the 1330s was terminated in September 1340 by the conclusion of the truce of Espléchin. From the point of view of coastal defence, the decade -- and particularly the years after 1338 -- had been a grim period for the English. Despite an English victory in set naval battle at Sluys, overall honours in terms of material damage inflicted in the naval war went to the French and their allies.⁵ It is true that the English had reciprocated with attacks on French shipping at sea and with the

1. C.C.R., 1339-41, pp. 55, 57, 64, 82, 83, 101, 135, 185, 215. See also C. Platt, Medieval Southampton. The Port and Trading Community, A.D. 1000-1600 (London, 1973), pp. 113-15.

2. C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 180.

3. C.P.R., 1340-3, p. 44.

4. C.P.R., 1338-40, pp. 206 (Carisbrooke), 208 (Pevensey).

5. For a comparison of relative damage of raids carried out in England by the French and in France by the English, cf. Platt, Medieval Southampton, pp. 111-13 for archaeological and documentary evidence of the destruction caused by the 1338 raid; and M. L. Carolus-Barré, 'Benoit XII et la Mission Charitable de Bertrand Carit dans les Pays Dévastés du Nord de la France', Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'École Française de Rome, lxii (1950), 165-232, cited in Hewitt, The Organization of War under Edward III, 1338-62 (Manchester, 1966) pp. 124-5, for destruction in the Thiérache and Cambrésis in 1339.

raid of 1337 on the Flemish island of Cadzand. It is also true that in comparison with the damage caused by Edward III's armies in France during this period the successes of the French in the naval war were negligible. None the less, in the strictly naval affairs, the French had managed to inflict damage and disruption in England far in excess of the effort expended.

One must not, however, overlook the fact that there had been great preparations in France for the naval raids upon England and for the abortive invasion plans of 1338-40. Indeed, even the Scots in the earlier part of the decade were involved in extensive naval preparations, although, since they relied heavily upon freebooters, few documentary records of their preparations have survived.¹ The years 1336-9, however, saw much naval activity in the ports of northern France. In 1335, the French Mediterranean fleet was transferred to ports in Normandy, and during that year, and the early months of 1337, these vessels, under the command of Hue Quiéret, were provisioned and fitted out.² An important feature of the preparations was

1. For example, the Scottish Exchequer Rolls do contain a few references to ships in this period, but make no mention of the costs of equipping vessels for war with crews and supplies (Rotuli Scaccarii Regnum Scotorum. The Exchequer Rolls of Scotland, ed. J. Stuart et al. (23 vols., Edinburgh, 1878-1908), i. 268, 289, 507, 530). Among the freebooters sailing under the Scottish flag were John de Sancta Agatha, who plundered English vessels in the Seine in 1335 (Foedera, II. ii. 912-13; C.C.R., 1333-7, pp. 462, 484, 620; C.C.R., 1337-9, p. 53), and the infamous John Crabbe (see E. W. M. Balfour-Melville, 'The Two John Crabbes', Scottish History Review, xxxix (1960), 31-4; H. S. Lucas, 'John Crabbe: Flemish Pirate, Merchant and Adventurer', Speculum, xx (1945), 334-50).

2. B. N., MS.fr25996, passim. See also table 1, following p. 13 for a select list of supplies issued by Thomas Fouques, the garde du Clos des Galées from 23 December 1336 onwards.

the part played by the Clos des Galées -- the naval arsenal established at Rouen in 1293-4 by Philip IV -- and its secondary establishments at Harfleur and Leure.¹ In October 1337, arrangements were made to increase the effective fighting force of the fleet by the hire of forty galleys from Genoa,² while in 1338, Castilian vessels may have been sent from the ports of northern Spain to aid the French.³ Between 1337 and 1340 there was great activity at the Clos des Galées, as record sources testify,⁴ and substantial sums were raised for furthering the war at sea. For instance, in 1337 the moneys raised by aids 'pour la garde de la mer' levied in the bailliages of Rouen, Caen, and the Cotentin amounted to £1,553 4s. 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. tournois, which were paid to Thomas Fouques, the garde du Clos des Galées.⁵ A large number of vessels were available for use against the English, particularly with the projected French invasion plans of 1338 and 1340. From mid-July 1338, for instance, there was a force of at least twenty

1. On the Clos des Galées see C. de Beaurepaire, 'Recherche sur l'Ancien Clos des Galées', Précis de l'Académie des Travaux, Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts de Rouen (Rouen, 1863-4); O. de Lafaye, Le Clos des Galées de Rouen (Rouen, 1877); C. de Bréard, Le Compte du Clos des Galées de Rouen au XIV^e Siècle (Rouen, 1893); A. Merlin-Chazelas, 'Quelques Notes sur le Clos des Galées de Rouen', Bull. des Amis des Monuments Rouennais (1958-70), 115-27. The principal general works on the period make passing reference to the Clos des Galées, e.g., H.P.A. Terrier de Loray, Jean de Vienne, Amiral de France, 1341-96 (Paris, 1877). Leure is now a quarter of Le Havre. In the fourteenth century, however, it was a more important port than either Harfleur or Honfleur (Lafaye, op. cit., p.7).

2. A.N., MS. Marine B. 6136 -- Galères, 1337.

3. Daumet, Étude sur l'Alliance de la France et de la Castille, pp. 6-7.

4. See table 1, following p. 13.

5. B.N., MS. fr. 25996/143.

TABLE 1

Select list of supplies of war issued by Thomas Fouques, garde du Clos de Galées,
to French vessels serving under Hue Quiéret and Nicolas Béhuchet, December 1336 - February 1339

DATE	MASTER	SHIP	SUPPLIES	REFERENCE
23. xii. 1336	Jehan Pascal	'galiot Seint Miquiel' of Leure	28 plates, 12 gambesons, 40 shields and targes with the arms of France *, 40 bascinets, 10 crossbows, 2 cases of quarrels, 60 lances, 10 'baudiez'	B.N., MS. fr. 25996/126
23. xii. 1336	Guillaume de la Lygne	'nef Seint Gerard' of Leure	40 plates, 20 gambesons, 80 bascinets, 40 crossbows, 20 pavises, 60 pavises with the arms of France *, 160 lances, 250 cases of quarrels, 1 'garot', 2 cases of quarrels	ibid., 25996/127
26. iv. 1337	Guillaume Brumen	(to be taken to Leure)	400 plates, 150 bascinets, 400 shields and targes, 200 crossbows, 200 'baudres', 4 'gairros', 4 cases of quarrels 'a gairoz'	B.N., MS. n.acq.fr. 3654, p. 2, no. 10
28. iv. 1337	Guillaume Brumen	'pour la garde ensuite de ladite ville'	200 plates 'desquelx y en y a huit vingt quatre toutes recouvertes et recluse de neuf', 15 bascinets, 200 shields and targes with the arms of France *, 6 cases of quarrels 'de j pie'	ibid., 3654, p. 2, no. 11
11. vi. 1337	Guillaume du Moustier	'La galie appelle Rochefort'	120 plates, 20 gambesons, 96 bascinets, 2 helms, 200 'chappeaux de Montauban des armes de France' *, 10 crossbows, 10 baldrics, 40 white pavises	ibid., 3653, p. 21, no. 29
2. x. 1337	Jehan Montaigne	'prevost de cheste presente armee de la mer'	100 pavises, 100 iron lances, 2 cases of quarrels	B.N., MS. fr. 25996/152
17. x. 1337	Robert le Carpentier	'bateline Johan'	20 plates, 20 gambesons, 1 case of quarrels 'a garot'	ibid., 25996/153
9. iii. 1338	Robert Brumen	'maistre de la barge que les galiez dont Dinas Pelegrin est capitaine'	40 plates, 40 bascinets, 50 shields and targes, 20 crossbows, 20 baldrics, 20 cases of quarrels, 12 lances, 17 darts	ibid., 25996/160
28. v. 1338	'Johan ou Daffroy le Jane'	'batel Seinte Marie la Bariaunde' of Harfleur	15 gambesons, 10 bascinets, 8 'chapiaux de mait', 25 targes and pavises, 6 crossbows, 6 baldrics, 1 case of quarrels	ibid., 25996/166
28. v. 1338	Johan Eodess' of Leure	'batel de Leure'	32 pairs of plates, 32 bascinets, 32 gorgets, 6 crossbows, 1 offer of quarrels, 6 baldrics, 36 targes and shields, 36 lances	ibid., 25996/165
28. v. 1338	Rogier Latoit	'nef Seint George' of Leure	25 gambesons, 11 bascinets, 5 'chapiaux de Montauben', 6 crossbows, 6 baldrics, 1 case of quarrels	ibid., 25996/167
20. ix. 1338	J. Pastel	'batel Johan Riant de Cauque'	10 plates, 8 bascinets, 10 targes & pavises, 4 crossbows, 4 baldrics	ibid., 25996/172
20. ix. 1338	Johan Cahistre	'batel de la nef Buiet de Castellayn'	10 plates, 8 bascinets, 4 crossbows, 4 baldrics, 10 shields	ibid., 25996/173
20. i. 1339	Johan l'Alemant, sergeant-at-arms	(arms for the defence of the Channel Islands)	30 new plates from 'Cauenar', 12 plates from Genoa, 32 bascinets all 'garni', 32 gorgets of 'ooton', 50 pavises all 'garnis', 21 new red shields with an inescutcheon of the arms of France *, 200 iron lances, 80 crossbows of 1 foot, 9 crossbows of 2 feet, 3 crossbows 'a tour' for the hand, 1 crossbow 'a tour', 80 baldrics, 4 'hauchepies', 4 'tours' for crossbows, 2 springalds 'garnis de ij braies cordes', 4 cases of quarrels feathered with latten for springalds	ibid., 25996/195
25. ii. 1339	Guillaume de Bordeaux	'la coque du roy aquis des Anglois'	50 new plates (5 of which covered with 'soie dorey', the rest with canvas), 50 bascinets 'garnis de pavillons', 100 targes & pavises (of which 60 are new red shields with an inescutcheon of the arms of France *), 80 new iron lances, 20 crossbows, 20 baldrics, 300 quarrels, 10 gambesons	ibid., 25996/196

* Note the provision of numerous shields bearing the French royal arms. This appears an infringement of the heraldic law that armorial bearings were a means of individual identification. Since, however, in many cases the arms were displayed on an inescutcheon, it is possible that they may have been regarded as a badge rather than as armorial bearings. Never the less, it is significant that the arms of the French monarch were now being used to identify the allegiance of the fleet of France. On English vessels, pavises bearing an inescutcheon of the royal arms within the Garter were sometimes used (N.H. Nicolas, History of the Royal Navy, ii. 183).

ships at sea under the command of Hue Quiéret,¹ while from May 1340, 200 vessels were being prepared for war in twenty-five ports along the coast of northern France.²

From such involvement dividends were expected. Apart from the chroniclers' accounts of French naval activities, testimony to the success of French squadrons at sea is poignantly made in French official sources. The references to English vessels captured and put into French service are numerous.³ More striking reflections of success are the rewards of £100 tournois paid in November 1338 to 'les premiers que entroient la ville de Hantoune',⁴ while references to the provisioning and garrisoning of the Channel Islands in 1339 are reminders of the fall of the Islands in the previous year.⁵

In view of the extent of French naval preparations during the 1330s, the measures taken in England for home defence were more than justified. Although it appears that the French did have the ability and resources to invade England during this period, the fact that their attacks took the form of hit-and-run raids, suggests that their naval policy was one of diversion.

1. B.N., MS. fr. 25996/212-15. Not all the vessels were used for offensives. Some were deployed 'a la deffense des parties maritimes' and 'pour doubte des annemies ez partiez de Bretagne' (ibid., 247, 248, 250, 253-257, 259, 261).

2. S. Luce, 'Discours de Monsieur Siméon Luce', Bull. de la Soc. des Antiqs. de Normandie, xxii (1883-5), 3-41.

3. B.N., MS. fr. 25996/196, 200.

4. B.N., MS. Clairambault, 825, p. 19, no. 49.

5. B.N., MS. fr. 25996/195, 217-218.

When the truce of Espléchin expired in June 1341, the war entered a new phase. The years up to 1360 were characterized by English successes abroad and the eventual abasement of the realm of France. In the naval war, this period from 1341 to 1360 was marked by two characteristics: a decline in Scottish naval activity and a substantial decrease in the number of actual enemy attacks upon the English coast.

From the early 1340s onwards, the Scots ceased to mount coastal attacks to the extent which they had in the 1330s. Instead, Scottish naval involvement took the form of individual attacks on shipping and the occasional threat to the exposed north-eastern coast. It would, however, be mistaken to claim that the Scots entirely ceased naval offensives. In 1357, for instance, Scottish vessels which had plundered English ships were captured at Great Yarmouth;¹ in 1378, John Philipot captured a Scottish captain, John Mercer, who had been active off the coast near Scarborough;² while in 1380, ships of Hull and Newcastle captured a number of Scottish vessels which had raided the northern coast.³

But generally speaking, Scottish aggression after 1341 chiefly took the form of land offensives across the border. The role of naval attackers was filled by the French and Castilians. Thus a specialization of roles developed. From a geographical point of view, it made sense for the Scots to concentrate on attacks in the north, while the harassment of the more southerly coasts could be left to their continental allies who were better equipped for naval war than they were themselves. Simultaneous attacks on both

1. Knighton, ii. 97-8.

2. Chronicon Anglie, p. 198.

3. Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 435-6.

extremities of the realm became definite strategy of the French and Scots, as it had been in the late thirteenth century when Thomas Turberville had advocated that French attack in the south while the Scots and Welsh attack in their own regions.¹ The resulting pincer-movement formed by waging war on two fronts stretched England's resources to the limit whenever it was employed, and justified the fears of the 'Auld Alliance' expressed by Edward III in 1332-3.² It is certain that contemporaries recognized this grand strategy: it was reflected in the poems of Laurence Minot,³ and more than one chronicler refers to it, Walsingham, for instance, stating in 1385 that:

'... dominus Johannes de Vienna ... pervenerit in Scotiam cum magna multitudine navium et hominum bellatorum, ut ad partes juncti Scotis totum regnum Angliae infestarent, et ut, dum ipsi potentium regni ad illo partes attraherent, et detinent occupatum, Rex Franciae cum suo navigio et exercitu congregato, alias partes regni licentius posset ingredi'.⁴

There were many instances of the employment of this strategy during the fourteenth century, often the presence of Scots raiders in the north serving to relieve the pressure of English attacks in France. In 1346, to cite the best-known example, Scottish penetration in the north was partly aimed at diverting the attention of the English from Calais, and was carried out in direct response to

1. J. G. Edwards, 'The Treason of Thomas Turberville, 1295', Studies in Medieval History presented to Frederick Maurice Powicke, ed. R. W. Hunt, W. A. Pantin and R. W. Southern (Oxford, 1948), pp. 296-309. The course of the 1295 crisis is traced further in Z. A. Freeman, 'A Moat Defensive: the Coast Defense Scheme of 1295', Speculum (1967), 442-62. The idea of simultaneous Franco-Scottish attacks on England had been mooted as early as the reign of William the Lion of Scotland in the late 1160s (A. L. Poole, From Domesday Book to Magna Carta, 1085-1216 (Oxford, 1955), p. 276).

2. P.R.O., C.47/28/5/22; C.47/30/2/14-16.

3. Political Poems and Songs relating to English History from the Accession of Edward III to the Reign of Henry VIII, ed. T. Wright (2 vols., R.S., London, 1859-61), i. 83.

4. Walsingham, Hist. Ang., ii. 129.

a request of Philip VI.¹ That it failed on this occasion was due to the preparations for the defence of the northern shires which had been made in advance by Edward III.² Throughout the fourteenth century and later, no English king could afford to neglect the northern 'back door' while he was campaigning abroad.

The second main feature of the period from 1341-60 was the marked decline in the number of attacks upon the English coast. In June 1340, the battle of Sluys had resulted in a signal victory for Edward III's fleet, and in the destruction or capture of many enemy vessels. The immediate danger of an invasion of England was thus removed. Nevertheless, the English victory at Sluys did not prevent further raids on the English coast: only two months after the battle, Teignmouth, Portland, and parts of Dorset were devastated by French and Castilian raiders.³ It cannot thus be said that the battle of Sluys gave England command of the seas and safety at home for the next twenty years, as some writers have implied.⁴ Nor can the diminution of enemy raids be attributed to the efficiency and success of the English defensive machinery.

1. Hemingburgh, ii. 421-3; Knighton, ii. 41; and Murimuth, p. 252 record that Philip VI loosely hinted at such a plan on 20 June, while his letter of 22 July stated more affirmatively that 'Exoramus itaque vos et requirimus super dilectione et alligantia habitis inter nos quatinus meliori modo et fortiori quo valetis ipsi ac toti patriae suae Angliae inferedi', and further assured David II that should Edward III return to England, the French fleet, which was already prepared 'cum armatorum copia', would give aid.

2. C.D.S., iii. 264, nos. 1450, 1452; p.268, nos. 1468, 1472.

3. C.C.R., 1339-41, p. 74; Nonarum Inquisitiones in Curia Scaccarii, ed. G. Vanderzee (R.C., London, 1807), p. 50; Baker, p. 70.

4. E.g., W. L. Clowes, The Royal Navy (5 vols., London, 1897), i. 257-8.

For the most valid interpretation of the significance of the battle of Sluys, see C. F. Richmond, 'The War at Sea', The Hundred Years' War, ed. K. A. Fowler (London, 1971), pp. 98-9.

The resounding success of French squadrons in the Channel and on the south coast between 1338 and 1340 told the reverse of that. The explanation for the decline in enemy attacks is to be found elsewhere -- in the course of the war in general.

Much of the early 1340s was covered by periods of truce. The decade began with a period of truce promulgated by the treaty of Espléchin, which lasted, nominally at least, until June 1341. Further truces punctuated this period, the longest -- that of Malestroit -- from June 1343 to March 1346. Within the six years from 1340 to 1346, a total of 43 months had been months of truce. Moreover, when the war had been renewed in 1341-2, it had been sparked off by events in Brittany, a theatre at first outside the mainstream of the war, although the involvement of the two principal belligerents in support of the rival Breton factions soon made it a central issue. The struggle in Brittany neutralized an important stretch of coastline from which the enemy had already mounted naval expeditions against England. Furthermore it gave the English points of embarkation into the French mainland, and this helped to keep the French occupied with the defence of their own realm. With troops thus tied down for internal defence, it became more difficult for the French to spare effort, money and manpower for naval raids with the same degree of involvement as in the 1330s. Raids did continue to some extent: the French attacked the unidentified Boure and Blame in 1341,¹ while Portsmouth was again burned and Southampton threatened in the following year.²

1. Chronique des Quatre Premiers Valois, p. 13. The dating of the attacks on these unidentified places is open to question. Since Southampton is also mentioned, the attacks may possibly be ascribed to 1338, or to 1342 when Southampton was again menaced.

2. Foedera, II. ii. 1210.

At times it appeared that the French demonstrated an inability to attack. In 1346 it had been agreed that the Scots would invade northern England while the French would simultaneously attack the south coast. Only the Scots were able to keep their part of the bargain. The naval offensive against England which was discussed in the Estates-General at Paris in November 1347 and scheduled for the campaigning season of 1348 never, in fact, took place.¹ By the late 1340s fresh disasters had occurred in France, and, in addition to the threat of English armies, the Black Death and the Free Companies took their toll.

The 1350s told the same tale. Although the battle of Les Espagnols-sur-Mer, while by no means a defensive engagement, nor important to the war as a whole, was fought in 1350, the French naval threat did not take on significant proportions until 1360. The events of the first half of the decade again tied the French down to their internal defence, while long drawn-out peace negotiations precluded any activity during the latter. It was only when those negotiations broke down in 1359 that French attacks were renewed.

If the number of actual attacks decreased after 1340, the threat of attack and in consequence, the need for defence remained. The crown had learned in the 1330s the bitter lesson that defence was essential against an enemy who could use the sea to his best advantage as a means of surprise. Consequently the central authorities were at pains to ensure that provision was made for the defence of the realm, particularly whenever the king was abroad with his army.

1. See Perroy, The Hundred Years' War, p. 121.

During the 1340s and 1350s, enemy naval activity did not, however, completely cease: French and Castilian squadrons were often at sea and on two occasions, plans for the invasion of England were put forward. Reports of spies and other sources ensured that Edward III was aware of enemy naval activity, but the crown could only speculate on the targets which might be attacked. Thus, the most pessimistic action was often adopted and the realm prepared for the worst just in case enemy attacks should take place. The year 1341, for instance, saw a series of measures for defence during the months of negotiation for an extension of truce, and 'especially in the absence of the king, who is about to go beyond the seas'. In February and March, royal commissioners were appointed to ensure that the Statute of Winchester and other peace-keeping legislation should be upheld¹ and security arrangements were made to prevent the leakage of information from the realm.² By June twin sets of orders for defence at sea and on land were issued: William de Clynton as captain and admiral of the western fleet was instructed to assemble and arm his vessels to take to sea to destroy Philip VI's 'magnam flotam galearum', while the sheriffs of maritime shires were to be intendent to the admirals and were to proclaim the array of fencibles in their shires to counter enemy landings.³ Throughout the year, also, preparations were made to strengthen towns: among many to receive grants of murage were Hereford, Wells, York and Newcastle,⁴ while the original grant of 1336 from the customs of

1. C.P.R., 1340-3, pp. 202, 206.

2. C.P.R., 1340-3, p. 203.

3. P.R.O., C. 76/16, m.20; Foedera, II. ii. 1165-6.

4. C.P.R., 1340-3, pp. 119 (Hereford, 10 years), 248 (Wells, 5 years), 255 (York, 7 years), 271 (Newcastle, 7 years).

Southampton for the building of a stone barbican was extended for a further five years.¹

Other years told similar stories of defensive preparations. In 1342 measures were taken for the defence of the Isle of Wight and the maritime lands in Hampshire;² in 1345 the defences of the Isle of Thanet were attended to,³ and despite the complaints of the lieutenant of the Justice of North Wales that the arraying of troops for overseas service was denuding North Wales of defenders, the local levies were quick to react against a squadron of unidentified hostile vessels which appeared off the coast of Caernarvon.⁴

In the early 1350s defensive precautions were again taken. 1351 witnessed appointments of keepers of the maritime land in many coastal shires⁵ while numerous arrays were made in 1352 'pro salvacione et defensione regni nostri anglie contra hostiles inimicorum nostrorum aggressus', and the safety of the Isle of Wight was especially attended to.⁶

1. C.P.R., 1340-3, pp. 136, 339. Although the crown was concerned about the defences of Southampton, it appears that the townsfolk themselves were not. On 6 July 1341, a commission of Oyer and Terminer was issued to investigate the accounts of the collection of 'barbicanage', which was being mostly converted to the burgesses' own use (*ibid.*, p. 311).

2. B.L., Cotton MS. Julius C. iv, fos. 10, 11.

3. Foedera, III. i. 53.

4. P.R.O., S.C.1/54/102; Calendar of Ancient Correspondence concerning Wales, ed. J. G. Edwards (Cardiff, 1935), pp. 247-8.

5. C.C.R., 1349-54, p. 356; Foedera, III. i. 217.

6. P.R.O., C.76/30, m.8; S.C.2/40/102, 103; S.C.1/41/30; S.C.1/63/231; C.C.R., 1349-54, pp. 239, 245; Foedera, III. i. 239.

The recognized importance of defence was especially significant during the years in which the English planned large campaigns in France. If 1346-7 saw great activity in England in connexion first with the Crécy campaign and then with its aftermath of the siege of Calais, they also witnessed great activity in ensuring that England was defended.¹ When Edward III's fleet sailed in July 1346, measures for defence were undertaken: the keepers of Southampton were ordered to look to the town's defence;² orders against evacuation from the maritime lands of certain counties were issued,³ the defences of Great Yarmouth were strengthened by the erection of bretaches,⁴ while ports were closed on 8 July to prevent spies from leaving the realm with intelligence.⁵

In August, after the king had departed, the keepers of the maritime lands and constables of coastal fortresses were instructed to look to the garde de la mer.⁶ The possibility of a Franco-Castilian naval attack to relieve the pressure on Calais in 1347 and again in 1348 was met with defensive measures.⁷ The years 1355-6, which witnessed military preparations for the Black

1. On the preparations for the Crécy campaign, see Hewitt, Organization of War under Edward III, passim.

2. P.R.O., C.76/23, m.16; Foedera, III. i. 86.

3. Foedera, III. i. 77-8, 87.

4. P.R.O., C.76/23, m.25^v.

5. P.R.O., C.76/23, m.3^v.

6. P.R.O., C.76/23, m.19^v.

7. E.g., Foedera, III. ii. 105-7.

On the French intentions to attack England see Daumet, Étude sur l'Alliance de la France et de la Castille, pp. 17-18; A. Coville, Les États de Normandie, p.60; Perroy, The Hundred Years' War, p. 121.

Prince's expedition, also witnessed numerous defensive measures, including arrays for defence, the erection of beacons, and the beaching of ships for safety.¹

The securing of the homeland during time of foreign campaigns suggests that the English had not only learned the lesson of the 1330s, but that they also recognized that retaliatory attacks might be launched as a diversion, and that such attacks were a positive part of French military policy. Whereas for several reasons the French had been unable to bring to fruition the threatened attacks of the mid-1340s and -1350s, the protracted period of truce and negotiations between 1357 and 1359 gave them time to consolidate and prepare for attacks on the south coast in 1360.² It was thought in England at the time, that the French aim was to rescue the captured King John and French nobles imprisoned in England, and this fear was supported by the known presence of horses aboard the vessels of the French fleet.³ But whether or not the raids had been planned as a rescue attempt, it is certain that they were made partly in retaliation for the ravages of Edward III's army which had been active in Artois and

1. P.R.O., C.76/34, mm.9,9^v; C.C.R., 1354-60, pp. 209, 214, 215. On the preparations for the overseas expeditions of these years, see H. J. Hewitt, The Black Prince's Expedition of 1355-1357 (Manchester, 1958), passim.

2. On the background to the negotiations from the truce of Bordeaux of March 1357 to the treaty of Brétigny in 1360, see J. Le Patourel, 'The Treaty of Brétigny', T.R.Hist.S., 5th series, x (1960), 19-39; R. Delachenal Histoire de Charles V (5 vols., Paris, 1909-31), ii. On the invasion preparations see B.N., MS. fr. 26002/857-9.

3. C.C.R., 1360-4, p. 107.

Champagne since October 1359, and partly as a diversion by bringing physical pressure to bear upon the realm of the enemy king.¹

Throughout 1359 preparations for the great campaign were very much in evidence, but defensive arrangements were not neglected since the fears of a French counter-attack were great. Even before the king's army departed, measures for the security of the realm were undertaken. Fortresses such as Leeds, Windsor and Marlborough and those of the Calais March were repaired and strengthened,² while even fortresses in Ireland were put in states of defence.³ Security measures were taken against spies,⁴ and the belief that the French intended an attempted rescue of the captive King John prompted instructions in July 1359 for his removal from Hertford castle to the more distantly situated Somerton castle in Lincolnshire.⁵ On 13 October the safety of the realm was entrusted in the king's absence to his son, Thomas of Woodstock, who was appointed guardian of England.⁶

The measures for defence were increased after 28 October, when Edward sailed for France. In November the arrayers in the northern shires were possibly urged to take precautions for defence against the Scots,⁷ but the greatest activity was seen in the steps

1. Contemporary chronicles deal very fully with Edward's ill-fated campaign of 1359-60, e.g., Walsingham, Hist.Ang., i. 286-8; Knighton, ii. 105; Chronicon Anglie, pp. 40-3.

2. C.P.R., 1358-61, pp. 187 (Leeds); 303 (Marlborough); 276 (Windsor); 174, 266 (Calais).

3. C.P.R., 1358-61, pp. 237, 247. The defence of Ireland also featured prominently in 1360 (ibid., p. 352; C.C.R., 1360-4, p.6).

4. C.P.R., 1358-61, p. 284.

5. C.P.R., 1358-61, p. 251.

6. C.P.R., 1358-61, p. 272; Walsingham, Hist.Ang., i. 286.

7. C.P.R., 1358-61, p. 306.

taken for the defence of the southern coasts. The extent of the defensive measures was greater than at any other time since the late 1330s, and 1359-60 may be truly regarded as the most active period of national defence during the pre-Brétigny phase of the Hundred Years' War. On 16 November 1359, a long series of commissions of array were issued for the counties of England and the lords of the great liberties of Lancaster, Wales and Chester, Durham, and the Cinque Ports were instructed to appoint arrayers within these liberties.¹ On the same day a commission of array was issued to the mayor and sheriffs of London.² The extent and completeness of these commissions indicate that the crown viewed the threat of attack on this occasion as one of extreme gravity. The appointment of overseers of the commissioners of array two days later, an extraordinary measure which had been made previously only in times of acute national peril, and then on only one or two occasions,³ further points to the fear in England.

The provincial gatherings summoned in view of the emergency in March 1360 to convene at meeting-points in the regions to vote on the granting of a subsidy were also an unusual measure, and one which reflects the extent of panic in England.⁴ They granted that a moiety of a tenth and a fifteenth be collected immediately and that the second moiety should not be levied until the enemy's intentions were known.

1. Ibid., p. 324.

2. Ibid., p. 325.

3. Ibid., p. 324. See p. 9 above.

4. C.P.R., 1358-61, pp. 343-8, 404-5, 414-15. On the subject of the provincial meetings and the granting of this subsidy, see W. N. Bryant, 'The Financial Dealings of Edward III with the County Communities, 1330-60', E.H.R., lxxxiii (1968), 768-70.

Why should the French threat on this occasion have prompted so great a reaction? Certainly the English thought that the French intended to recapture John the Good: even sterner measures were taken for his safe custody in March 1360, when arrangements were made for his secret transfer from Somerton castle to Berkhamsted castle.¹ Probably the English also feared the possibility of invasion, since defensive writs contain numerous references to the fact that the French were equipped with horses: repeated concern with arraying the levies in February and early March,² and with the provision of ships and troops for defence at sea,³ was based upon information that the enemy planned to invade. Possibly the underlying factor was that the English, who, by military force in France, were seeking to pressurize the French into ceding to them favourable terms, feared that the French would be in a better position to bargain if they recaptured John the Good, or especially if they succeeded in occupying a portion of England.⁴

1. C.P.R., 1358-61, p. 340; C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 11, 100; Foedera, III. i. 470, 472, 475. Security arrangements for other important French prisoners were also tightened up (C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 14-15). Removal of prisoners to places of safer custody in times of danger was not unusual. In 1340, for instance, Scottish hostages were moved from prisons on the south coast to Nottingham castle (C.D.S., iii. 243, nos. 1336, 1339).

2. C.P.R., 1358-61, pp. 406, 411; C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 96-8. The commissions of 2 March ordered the levies of both maritime and inland shires to go immediately to the coast for its defence, while on the preceding 10 February, the crown had summoned two knights and two burgesses from each shire and borough to discuss the making of arrays (C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 96-7).

3. C.P.R., 1358-61, pp. 302, 307, 349, 350, 351, 411, 413, 427, 452; C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 10, 14, 16, 17, 25, 29, 99, 107, 109.

4. On the reasons for Edward III's undertaking the campaign of 1359-60, see Le Patourel, op. cit., p.30.

Although England had spent the winter months of 1359-60 under the cloud of threatened invasion, the first actual attack did not occur until 15 March 1360 when the French descended on Winchelsea and did great damage.¹ Despite previous fears, the attackers withdrew after one day. None the less, the threat of attack remained, and was now even more real. From mid-March an escalation in defensive measures took place, and possibly the greatest preoccupation with defence of the first phase of the Hundred Years' War was witnessed on this occasion. Reaction was immediate: on the same day as the attack, the royal council alerted at Reading, ordered the mobilization of every ship and large barge, including those on the Flemish coast, and vessels thus impressed were to be sent, duly equipped with crews and troops, to the rendezvous point at Sandwich.² On land, provision was made for the more adequate defence of the coastal shires: arrays were ordered in Kent on 15 March,³ on the 26th the abbots of Battle and Robertsbridge and others were appointed to take charge of the defence of the rape of Hastings,⁴ while a similar commission was issued to John de Sarham and others in the liberty of Pevensey.⁵ Fortifications were also put in order in many places, among them the castles of Dover, Norwich, Bristol,

1. Chronicon Anglie, pp. 40-1; Knighton, ii. 109; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 287.

2. Foedera, III. i. 476; C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 9, 10, 15-18; C.P.R., 1358-61, pp. 100, 350, 351, 411, 413.

3. C.P.R., 1358-61, p. 416.

4. Ibid., p. 411.

5. Ibid., p. 414.

Marlborough, Old Sarum, Portchester, Rochester, and Winchester, while the northern fortress of Berwick and castles in Yorkshire were not neglected.¹

Although truce negotiations began in April 1360, and the defensive forces were allowed to stand down at the end of the month, the crown still showed concern for defence. Repairs to castles continued well into the end of the year, while in June the bailiffs of Gloucester were ordered to repair their walls and towns, 'the truce with France ... not withstanding ... because it is advisable that the town should be well fortified in time of peace as in war.'² The crown was beginning to show an interest in fortifications in the long term, an interest which heralded the policy of construction and repairs at Queenborough and Hadleigh in the 1360s, and at other coastal places such as Dover, Cooling and Bodiam in the 1370s and 1380s. Evidently the raids of 1360 had shocked the government: for the first time, as the report on the attack on Winchelsea put it, the French 'with their horses' were 'riding over the country, slaying, burning, destroying'.³ Thus the threat of an invasion became a reality and the inadequacy of the local levies, revealed by the attack in March, showed the necessity for the adequate provision of additional fixed defences.

The French in 1360 had thus proved that the mere threat of invasion could cause untold disruption in England. It is

1. Bristol: C.P.R., 1358-61, p. 472; Dover: *ibid.*, pp. 419, 452; Marlborough and Old Sarum: C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 9, 15-16, 34; Norwich: C.P.R., 1358-61, pp. 419-20; Portchester: *ibid.*, p. 14; Rochester: *ibid.*, p. 15; Winchester: *ibid.*, pp. 14, 15; Berwick: C.P.R., 1358-61, p. 586; Yorkshire castles: *ibid.*, p. 437.

2. C.C.R., 1360-4, p. 43.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 107. The italics are mine.

impossible to assess the costs of the defensive arrangements of 1359-60 in terms of cash and manpower, but it is certain that they were extremely heavy. Moreover, it is likely that the fright of the invasion scare coupled with its burdens of protracted defence and with the frustrations of Edward III's campaign of 1359-60, -- all of which contributed to English war-weariness -- in part explain the relatively generous terms upon which the English were ready to agree at Brétigny.

Thus the first phase of the war with France had witnessed a great deal of defensive activity. The period had opened with enemy attacks upon the coast, and had ended on the same grim note. On both occasions, the raids had been both materially and psychologically damaging to the English. On each occasion, fear, panic, and dissatisfaction had resulted. The effects of the attacks of the late 1330s had been amplified by the English uncertainty, in its opening years, as to which course the war would take. To the English, ringed on all sides by enemies and having yet to prove themselves in a European war, the evidence of the successful French raids, coupled with lack of military success on the continent before 1340, suggested that the war was going against them. The attacks of 1360 -- the first of any severity upon the coast for almost twenty years -- came as a shock to the English, and, moreover, came at a time when English military fortunes abroad were at their lowest ebb since the 1330s.

Although the years between these two terminal periods had witnessed few actual attacks, the prevailing need for defence remained a burden. The period between 1336 and 1360 in fact saw a marked increase in the number of 'total mobilizations' of the county

levies for defensive duties.¹ Concern with matters of defence also resulted in experimentation in this period, and manifested itself chiefly in frequent changes in the composition and personnel of commissions of array, and in the important changes in legislation concerning the local levies in the 1340s.²

Although the first phase of the war has been traditionally seen as ending with the abasement of France, the French had proved that they could wreak damage in England, albeit on a smaller scale than the level of violence meted out by the English in France. But although the French raids upon England caused damage and raised an outcry, their real significance lay in their long-term effects. Fears of further raids led to contingency measures being taken against the possibility of attack: for over twenty years men were frequently stood to arms in the coastal shires, and concern for the defence of the realm was a constantly recurring topic. The French had thus gained much for relatively little effort. As the repeated references to the problems of defence in the Rolls of Parliament and other sources show, the burdens of prolonged defensive service during the first phase of the war were not insignificant. For the defenders of England, the sealing of a peace treaty with the French in 1360 must have been a welcome respite from their onerous defensive duties.

1. See below, Chs. IV and VI.

2. See M. Powicke, Military Obligation in Medieval England. A Study in Liberty and Duty (Oxford, 1962), pp. 184-210.

CHAPTER TWO

THE YEARS OF FORMAL PEACE, 1360-9

The eight and a half years of peace between the sealing of the treaty of Brétigny in 1360 and the renewal of war in 1369 were years of respite from attack for the populace of the English coastal shires. This period of peace also serves as a convenient interlude between the two main fourteenth-century phases of the Hundred Years' War, the one distinct from the other.

If the 1340s and 1350s had witnessed very few actual enemy attacks upon the coasts of England, the fear of attack had, none the less, always been present, and 1360 had briefly witnessed a revival of the horrors of the late 1330s. With the conclusion of the treaty of Brétigny, the fear of attack disappeared for a few years at least.

Although a treaty had been sealed, peace was by no means universal. Throughout the 1360s, the Hundred Years' War, in its wider, European context, continued: English troops, in the guise of freelances, still found a market for their talents as Free Companions in France, in Normandy and Brittany, or with the forces of the Black Prince in the Iberian peninsula. In many parts of France, war remained a prominent part of daily life, but in England the immediate dangers of war decreased. Nevertheless, even in

England military activity did not completely cease. Troops and supplies continued to be raised in the English shires for service overseas, whether in garrisons in northern France, Aquitaine and Ireland, or to join bodies of English troops fighting in various far-off theatres of war. To convey them ships were needed. The only difference between military mobilization in England during this decade and mobilization in periods of open war was one of scale, and of degree of urgency. Mobilization was also directed towards overseas involvement, and few defensive levies were made during the period of peace.¹

One may, however, discern a certain amount of defensive thinking in the persisting involvement overseas during this decade. Continued intervention in Normandy and Brittany was indirectly important to the defence of England. It was essential to deny large stretches of coastline to the French and also to have continental bases from which the French could be threatened into preoccupation with the defence of their homeland in the event of a renewal of war. Edward III had attempted to gain continental footholds in the 1330s and 1340s by wooing allies, first in Flanders, then in the Empire and in Brittany. In the 1370s and 1380s, a similar aim was pursued in the English 'barbican policy' of maintaining fortresses on the periphery of French territories. In the 1360s, upkeep of fortresses such as Cherbourg, Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte and Calais foreshadowed the 'barbican policy', while English involvement in the Iberian peninsula may

1. In June 1363, for example, Robert de Herle, the constable of Dover castle and warden of the Cinque Ports, was ordered to array men in the liberty of the Cinque Ports for defence, because the king had heard rumours from overseas (C.C.R., 1360-4, p.536).

partially have been undertaken with the intention of occupying the enemy in a theatre of war far from the home front. This idea of 'defence in offence' certainly became a concerted part of English military policy by the following decade, as the 'way of Flanders' vied with the 'way of Portugal', although it would obviously be mistaken to regard all overseas offensives as undertaken primarily with defence of the homeland in mind.¹ Involvement in Iberia, both in this decade and also later was influenced by an additional and more tangible prize to play for. Her alliance with Castile from 1340 had brought France the deadly asset of the services of the Castilian fleet. Both French and English well knew the value of such a weapon. The English, from the original outbreak of war, had attempted to secure the services of this fleet, or to find another source of galleys to counter it. In 1335, Edward III had unsuccessfully solicited Alphonso XI of Castile for a naval alliance,² while the later alliance of 1383 with Portugal had brought with it the immediate bonus of a squadron of Portugese galleys.³ The involvement of the Black Prince in Spain in the 1360s and that of John of Gaunt in the 1380s was probably partly motivated by the desire to gain the use of the Castilian galleys, or at least to deny their services to England's enemies.

In England herself, the fear of attack, and, correspondingly, the immediate need for defence, declined during the 1360s. In

1. See Ch. XII.

2. Daumet, Étude sur l'Alliance de la France et de la Castille, p. 3.

3. P. E. Russell, English Intervention in Spain and Portugal in the Time of Edward III and Richard II (Oxford, 1955), pp. 376, 415-16, 527-8.

consequence, no royal defensive writs appointing local officials for defence or writs containing general defensive instructions were issued prior to 1369, when the possibility of renewal of war made Englishmen's thoughts turn once more to defence. Such a trend is understandable since the 1360s, for the most part, witnessed no major defensive crises, and since the appointments of defensive officials were usually temporary ones, made only in times of emergency.

Despite the lack of instructions from the crown in matters of defence, the principle of the garde de la mer was not forgotten, and the posse comitatus of the coastal shires was ready for active service should need be. The sole recorded enemy attack during the period of peace shows that, even without prior warning from the central authorities, the defensive forces were on the alert. If John of Reading's chronicle is to be believed, in 1366 a small Danish fleet, probably blown off course by a storm in the North Sea, attacked the coast of East Anglia.¹

1. Chronica Johannis de Reading et Anonymi Cantuariensis, 1346-67, ed. J. Tait (Manchester, 1914), p. 171. Although this was probably only a small fleet which made an accidental landfall - if indeed the incident, which is not documented elsewhere, took place - there would certainly have been cause for alarm. There had been a tradition of enmity with the Danes (and also with the kingdom of Norway) from the thirteenth century, and this tradition lingered into the fourteenth century. In 1367, the Scots made an offensive alliance with Denmark and Norway, 'insulanos sibi in depopulationem Anglorum confoederabunt ... insuper Angliam spoliare' (ibid., p. 181). In 1363, Valdemar III of Denmark had offered to invade England with 12,000 men in return for 600,000 florins from John II of France (ibid., p. 337; Regesta Diplomatica Historiae Danicae (Copenhagen, 1889), Series 2, I. i. 321, no. 2341), an offer which was made again in 1369, although nothing came of it (R. Delachenal, Histoire de Charles V (5 vols., Paris, 1909-31), ii. 95-6, 102).

By the fourteenth century, the ships of the Danes were not the irresistible weapons which they had been during the Viking age, having now been made obsolete by the more efficient cog (K. Gjerset, History of the Norwegian People (2 vols., New York, 1932) ii. 11-12).

That they were speedily repelled by the local levies indicates that the local defensive forces had not fallen into abeyance, and the speed with which the attack was countered suggests that, even in peace-time, watches were kept along the coast to give advance warning. The incident also shows that the local levies could be mobilized for service without prior warning or orders from the central government. In such instances, the forces were probably mobilized by those local officials, the constables of hundreds and vills, whose initiative stemmed not from the central government, but from their own localities.¹ The links of the constables with the local levies were constant, as a result of their unceasing involvement in police duties.² The posse comitatus, by statute and by usage, was liable for service both in a peace-keeping role and in a defensive role. Because the fencibles of a county were always liable to be called upon to help keep the peace, their permanent organization as a peace-keeping force meant that they could rapidly be alerted for the needs of defence. If the threat of external attack diminished during the 1360s, the crime rate remained high.³ Thus the posse technically remained active in matters of the defence of the realm from within. Indeed, it is clear that contemporaries viewed both the maintenance of civil order and the guarding of frontiers as 'defence of the realm'.

1. See below, pp. 132-40.

2. For the opposite of this point of view see M. McKisack, The Fourteenth Century, 1307-99 (Oxford, 1966), p. 203.

3. On fourteenth-century crime in general, see McKisack, The Fourteenth Century, pp. 200-5; Hewitt, The Organization of War under Edward III, pp. 29-31. On the activities of criminals at a slightly earlier date, see E. L. G. Stones, 'The Folvilles of Ashby-Folville in Leicestershire, and their Associates in Crime, 1326-47', T.R.Hist.S., 5th series, vii (1957), 117-36.

If attacks upon England herself were rare during the 1360s, there were certain Englishmen upon whom the crown continued to place burdens of defence. As the obligations of defensive service had been taken by the English into Wales, so were they extended to Ireland. In the same way as persons with lands on the coast or on the Scottish border could be ordered to go there and remain in defence, so might persons with lands in Ireland be directed to look to the defence of those lands. The troubles of the 1360s in Ireland made defensive measures there necessary. Thus, in 1361, the growing native threat to the English settlements in Ireland gave rise to royal writs ordering all Englishmen with lands in Ireland to go there in person for their defence.¹

In England, security measures, more common in time of war, were still sometimes implemented. In April 1361, for instance, the ports were closed to travellers and exports were prohibited, although the reasons behind such measures on this occasion were mainly economic ones.² Regulations concerning the local levies were not overlooked. A most important innovation of the decade was the introduction, in 1363, for the first time, of compulsory archery practice on feast days and Sundays, and a ban on idle games such as football. Thus, the provisions of the Statute of Winchester relating to the keeping of arms were amplified by the crown's ensuring that persons required to keep certain arms

1. C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 253, 278. See also Foedera, III. ii. 848.

2. C.C.R., 1360-4, p. 264.

knew how to use them.¹ It is also ensured that the continuing peace did not result in a decline in the standards and numbers of archers in England.

The most easily traceable measures linked with defence made during this decade were in the sphere of fortifications. It is, however, dangerous to generalize on the realm as a whole in this matter. The medieval tendency to neglect fortifications and military institutions in time of peace was much in evidence in certain areas. At Canterbury in 1363, for instance, it was reported that the walls were falling down and the ditches were obstructed, while an inquiry of 1369 into the states of castle Cornet and Gorey castle in the Channel Islands reported them as being in a very dilapidated condition.² On the other hand, extensions to existing fortifications were carried out throughout the decade. In many sites along the coast, works were executed. In some instances, these merely involved the upkeep of domestic buildings, but in many others, the works were carried out on the fortifications themselves. At Scarborough castle and Dover castle and town the fortifications were strengthened,³ while even

1. Foedera, III.ii. 704; C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 534-5. As well as making archery practice compulsory, it provided imprisonment as a punishment for all who indulged in idle games such as football, handball, quoits, cock-fighting, and other worthless pastimes. In France, similar measures were introduced at a slightly later date. An ordonnance of 1369 compelled all subjects of the French king to 'exercer et habiler en fait de trait d'arc ou d'arbalestes' for 'la deffense de nostre dit royaume', and banned such worthless games as 'dice', 'tables', 'palmes', 'quiller', 'palet', 'soules', and 'billes'. The penalty for contravention was 40s. parisis (Ordonnances des Rois de France de la troisieme Race, ed. D. Secousse et al. (22 vols., Paris, 1723-1849), v. 172; B.N., MS. fr. 26009/972).

2. C.P.R., 1361-4, p. 373 (Canterbury); C.P.R., 1367-70, p. 263 (Castle Cornet and Gorey).

3. P.R.O., E. 101/27/12, C.C.R., 1360-4, p. 454 (Scarborough); P.R.O., E. 101/462/19-22, C.P.R., 1358-61, pp. 343, 452-3, 480, C.P.R., 1361-4, pp. 251, 405, C.P.R., 1364-7, p. 320, C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 63, 237, C.I.M., iii. 159, no. 432 (Dover).

ecclesiastical sites near the coast were fortified, the abbot of Quarr, for instance, receiving licence to crenellate his abbey against invaders in 1365.¹ The most striking of all activity in fortifications was carried out by the crown, and was undeniably undertaken with considerations of national security in mind. At Queenborough, in the Isle of Sheppey, works were in progress from 1361 on a completely new castle, well designed for use with artillery, and guarding the inshore approaches along the south bank of the Thames.² At Hadleigh, on the northern side of the estuary, substantial extensions to the original castle of Hubert de Burgh were undertaken from 1361-2 onwards.³ At the other places such as Rochester, Edward III also had works in hand.⁴ The geographical siting of the major works of the decade were, significantly, in the region of the Thames estuary, guarding the approaches to London from the penetration of an enemy fleet along the Thames.

Although England had benefitted from almost nine years of peace between 1360 and 1369, the question of home defence was thus not completely neglected. Although few attacks occurred, the defensive forces showed that they were still prepared to act if danger threatened. The central government's interest and lead

1. P.R.O., E. 362/9260, cited in S. F. Hockey, The Abbey of Quarr and its Lands, 1132-1631 (Leicester, 1970), p. 176.

2. R. A. Brown, H. M. Colvin and A. J. Taylor, The History of the King's Works (2 vols. + case of plans, London, 1963), ii. 793-804. See below, pp. 247-8.

3. H.K.W., ii. 659-66.

4. E.g., P.R.O., E.101/479, mm. 3, 5.

in the construction of fortifications and the regulating of military training showed that the crown continued to recognize the security of the realm as essential. Understandably, the incidence of defensive activity between 1360 and 1369 did not match the levels of involvement during the first phase of open war between England and France from 1337 to 1360. But it is apparent that insecurity never really disappeared in England. Insecurity was fostered by crime and decay in civil order, which themselves made necessary steps for internal security; in Ireland, the threat to English settlements, growing apace since the Gaelic revival of the 1330s, raised defensive problems, the burdens of which were felt by many lords in England who also possessed Irish lands; in Wales, famines, plagues, and discontent with English rule had, in many areas, given rise to dissent, which became increasingly prevalent during the 1350s and 1360s, and which was to manifest itself in sympathy with the French in the 1370s and later.¹ All served to preserve a certain amount of defensive thinking in men's minds, and when the road towards a renewal of war became more apparent in late 1368 and during 1369, it was but a simple task to place the defensive machinery on a fully operational war footing to combat the enemy.

1. See below, pp. 57-60.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SECOND PHASE OF THE WAR, 1369-89

When hostilities between England and France were resumed in January 1369, the war entered a new phase. After 1369, the English were to gain very little tangible success abroad, while, on the home front, the extent of enemy naval attacks increased. If the first period of war had witnessed limited material damage by French raiders, chiefly in the years 1338-40 and in 1360, practically each year of war after 1369 was marked by some spoliation of coastal towns and shipping, accompanied by a resultant fear among the English people and panic within government circles. Renewal of war brought with it a France rejuvenated and eager to capitalize upon England's military weaknesses.

The early years of the reign of Charles V, who had succeeded John II in 1364, had witnessed far-reaching reorganization in France. A series of military ordonnances promulgated by Charles V in the 1360s and in the early 1370s -- chiefly pertaining to musters, the supply of archers, and military training -- increased the French military potential, while developments in fortifications helped to make France a tougher nut for an invader

to crack.¹ As important, if not more so, were the fiscal reforms which had taken place during the 1360s. The gabelle, aide, and taille granted by the Estates of Amiens in 1363 developed into a permanent source of revenue throughout Charles V's reign, and ensured that for the first time regular funds were available to finance French military and naval effort.²

These improvements in military and financial organization gave the French king the troops and resources with which to counter the inroads of the enemy within his own realm. Developments in the naval sphere enabled him to take the offensive and to carry the war to England. The military reforms of the 1360s and 1370s were paralleled by naval reforms in the early 1370s.³

1. Ordonnances des Rois de France de la Troisième Race, ed. D. Secousse, v. 168 (fortifications), 172 (archery practice), 657-8 (musters). See also P. Contamine, Guerre, État et Société à la Fin du Moyen Âge (Paris/The Hague, 1972), pp. 4-11.

2. For a fuller discussion of these developments, see Delachenal, Histoire de Charles V, iv. 226-33; J. J. N. Palmer, England, France and Christendom, 1377-99 (London, 1972), pp. 3-4; J. B. Henneman, Royal Taxation in Fourteenth-Century France. The Development of War Financing, 1322-56 (Princeton, 1971).

3. Principal among these were the ordonnance of 13 January 1374, which reorganized the Clos des Galées (de Lafaye, Le Clos des Galées, pp. 22-4; B. N., MS. Clairambault 825, p. 21, no. 52), the regulation of rights of prize of 1373 (A.N., Marine A.¹, I, fos. 18-22. This ordonnance of 7 December 1373 was ratified by Charles VI in 1400. The reference refers to the ratification), and the edict of 1379 defining the rights of the Admiralty and the jurisdiction of the admiral (A.N., Marine A.³, I, p. 11). No less important was the ordonnance of 3 September 1376 governing the cutting of trees in the Norman forests of Roumare and Rouvray for delivery to the Clos des Galées for ship-building (A.N., Marine A.³, I, p. 11; B.N., n.acq.fr., 1753, p. 50; Ordonnances des Rois de France, vi. 218-22). It has been noted that Charles V himself personally inspected the fellings on occasion with the Genoese admiral Renier Grimaldi (C. E. de Fréville de Lorme, Mémoire sur le Commerce Maritime de Rouen (2 vols., Rouen/Paris, 1857), ii. 263).

But already by the late 1360s there was much preparatory activity in the ports of Normandy, and particularly in the Clos des Galées at Rouen.¹ Most significant of all, however, was the alliance of France and Castile, which, perpetuated by the treaty of 1371, ensured that the French would have the continual services of Castilian galleys.² These proved an invaluable arm of offence to the French during this second phase of the war. In 1371, Henry of Trastamara sent a fleet of ten ships and thirteen barges under the command of Cabeza de Vaca and Ruy Diaz de Rojas³; in 1372, in addition to the Castilian fleet victorious at La Rochelle, forty ships, eight galleys and thirteen barges were despatched from Castile to serve with Owen of Wales;⁴ in 1373 fifteen galleys under the command of Ferrando Sanchez de Tovar were sent to France.⁵

1. E.g., B.N., MS. fr. 26009/834, 839, 890, 895, 923, 924, 934, 955, 1029. See also O. Lafaye, Le Clos des Galées de Rouen (Rouen, 1877), pp. 6-7, 9-11.

2. Daumet, Étude sur l'Alliance de la France et de la Castille, pp. 163-8, p.j.xxxi. Although the treaty guaranteed continuing Castilian support, Castilian galleys were not the only auxiliaries of the French fleet, as some writers have suggested. Genoese galleys, which had played such an important role in the French naval effort of the 1330s, continued in the French service in the 1370s, although by this time Castilian vessels were indeed more important. For instance, in May 1372 a squadron of eight Genoese galleys was at sea under the command of Renier Grimaldi (H.P.A. Terrier de Loray, Jean de Vienne, Amiral de France, 1341-96 (Paris, 1877), pp. xi-xii, p.j. xvi).

3. Daumet, Étude sur l'Alliance de la France et de la Castille, p. 35.

4. Ibid., pp. 35-6.

5. Ibid., p. 38.

Furthermore, the French themselves began to undertake a programme of shipbuilding from the early 1370s, the principal depot, of construction being at the Clos des Galées from 1374 onwards.¹

These developments in France made it evident that the renewal of war would be accompanied by a change in the patterns of hostilities.² As relations between England and France began to worsen from 1368, tentative preparations for attack and defence were undertaken by the French and English. In the Calais March - as a frontier zone always vulnerable and important as a first line of defence for England herself - defensive preparations were in evidence during the closing months of 1368.³ Although open war was not formally precipitated until the pronouncement of the confiscation of Aquitaine, ^{in November 1369} preparations for the defence of England had been undertaken since the early months of 1369. In March, the custodes pacis in the shires and the mayor, sheriffs and aldermen

1. See A. Merlin-Chazelas, 'Quelques Notes sur le Clos des Galées de Rouen', Bulletin des Amis des Monuments Rouennais (1958-70), 121. Evidence suggests, however, that even before this date some building was taking place at the clos, or at least that repairs and fitting out of ships amounted, in many cases, to major overhauls. See, for example, the expenses of works on three barges in July 1370 (B.N., MS. fr., 26009/934), and also the wages of workmen 'qui font a present certaine quantite de barges au clos des galees' in February 1369 (*ibid.*, 839).

2. This was certainly recognized in England by 1371, as is revealed by the statement in parliament that the French were now stronger than ever before (Rot. Parl., ii. 303).

3. E.g., P.R.O., C.76/52, mm. 20, 25; E.364/2, m.12^v; E.364/6, m.36^v; B.L., Add. MS. 24511, fos. 53-7. The defensive preparations were doubtless partly aimed at countering enemy military activity within the French-held fortresses which ringed the perimeter of the Calais March. See J. R. Alban, 'Une Révolte des Prisonniers de Guerre Anglais à Saint-Omer au XIV^e Siècle', Bulletin de la Soc. Académique des Antiquaires de la Morinie, xxii (1974), 166-7.

in London were ordered to array all fencibles between sixteen and sixty years of age, to organize them into thousands, centaines and vintaines, and to hold them in array to be ready by Whitsun at the latest 'to march for the defence of the realm so often as danger shall threaten by the inroads of the king's enemies'.¹ In July, even more stringent commissions of array were issued, following French attacks on Aquitaine, and it was feared that England would be the next target, since it was well known that the French had been preparing a fleet.² The clergy were also to be arrayed in accordance with an agreement to that effect reached in the Westminster parliament held on the octave of Trinity, a parliament in which much of the business was devoted to the renewal of the war.³ May and June saw the issue of writs prohibiting withdrawals from the coastal areas, the inhabitants of Southampton and Winchester being especially enjoined not to quit their towns or to remove their goods from them.⁴ Fortifications merited particular concern, many castles and towns lying near the coast being fortified and strengthened. In June, for instance, oaks were delivered to Southampton for the defences

1. C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 18. Similar instructions were sent to the bishop of Durham, the constable of Dover castle and the warden of the Cinque Ports, and to the mayors and bailiffs of Southampton and Winchester.

2. C.C.R., 1369-74, pp. 36-7. On the French naval preparations see B.N., MS. fr. 26009/813, 814, 815, 816, 818, 834; Arch. Dép., Seine-Maritime, Registre du Tabellionnage de Rouen, 1369-73, fos. 1^v, 31^v; Fonds Danquin, v, liasse 3, pièce 17.

3. C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 38; Rot. Parl., ii. 302.

4. C.C.R., 1369-74, pp. 20, 29.

of the castle¹, works were carried out at the castles of Gloucester, Carisbrooke, and Portchester², while at Rochester an inquiry into the state of the defences was held.³ In parliament in May, the commons, showing a concern for fortifications rarely expressed hitherto, pleaded for the strengthening of all strongholds on the coast and on the Scottish border, and recommended that chains, pales, 'et autres instrumentz' be placed on arms of the sea and at river mouths to prevent the penetration of enemy vessels.⁴ Such outcries were to become a permanent feature of the parliaments of the 1370s and 1380s.

The defensive measures of 1369, repeated in 1370 and succeeding years, were not taken for naught. The intensified preparations in French ports of fleets under leaders such as Jean de Vienne, Owen of Wales and Don Ruy Diaz de Rojas were evidently well reported back to the English crown by its agents.⁵ And the threat embodied in such preparations soon became a reality with attacks on English shipping and with raids upon the coast. Portsmouth was attacked in 1369, Gosport in 1370, while the coast of East Anglia was menaced in 1371.⁶ In 1372 the island of

1. Ibid., p. 26.

2. C.P.R., 1367-9, p. 205 (Carisbrooke); C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 43 (Gloucester); F.R.O., E.101/479/19, 20 (Portchester).

3. C.I.M., 1348-77, pp. 281-2, no. 743.

4. Rot. Parl., ii. 300, 301. This request was extended in 1371 to a plea that the king's subjects be permitted to erect fortifications at will 'en salvation et en defense de son Roialme' (ibid., 307).

5. Such preparations are well documented. See, for example, B.N., MS. fr., 26009/813, 814, 815, 818, 834, 839, 885, 890, 901, etc.

6. Foedera, III. i. 868, 925; W. L. Clowes, The Royal Navy. A History from the earliest Times to the Present (5 vols., London, 1897), i. 280.

Guernsey was attacked by a large force led by Owen of Wales.¹ In such a situation the English government was only able to order that the usual defensive measures be implemented, while naval resources proved impotent against the French menace. Indeed, within the defensive measures taken between 1369 and 1372, and later in the 1370s, the traces of a growing panic may be discerned. Moreover, if the attacks of 1369 to 1372 created a grave state of affairs, the effective intervention of the Castilian fleet in 1372 worsened the situation, so much so that in the years before the truce of Bruges in March 1375, enemy fleets proved that they could coast along the Channel with impunity. The result of this was widespread despondency in England, a feeling intensified by lack of tangible English military success abroad and by the defeat of the earl of Pembroke's fleet at La Rochelle in 1372 which, to many, emphasised English naval inefficiency.

That naval decline was seen as the cause of the troubles is reflected in the telling number of complaints over the state of the navy in the parliaments of this period. In 1371, the evils of over-long arrest of vessels and crews were instanced as responsible for naval decline, a sentiment repeated in 1372 and in 1373.² Although on each occasion the crown met such pleas with vague promises to rectify any such defects, little was actually

1. The attack is also recorded in a contemporary Guernsey poem entitled 'La Descente des Aragousais' (Greffe, Guernsey, Greffe Collection No. 125). See also 'Yvon de Galles, ou la Descente des Aragousais: Épisode de l'Histoire de Guernesey en 1372', *ibid.*, Greffe Collection, No. 94; T. W. M. de Guérin, 'Some Important Events in Guernsey History', La Soc. Guernesiaise (St. Peter Port, 1909), 112-18.

2. Rot. Parl., ii. 306-7, 311, 319-20.

done, and complaints concerning naval affairs remained an almost permanent feature of successive parliaments into the following decade. Admittedly such complaints had a grain of substance in them, but it is clear that the real reason for English naval setbacks lay not so much in the fact that there had been a decline in English naval power, but in the increased efficiency and professionalism of the French naval forces, reinforced by the galleys of Castile.¹ This increased French efficiency was reflected in the pattern of attacks during the 1370s, which were on a far wider scale than hitherto.

Despite repeated complaints over the navy and about damage done by Franco-Castilian vessels, the crown did little beyond putting into action the machinery of defence. This ultimately caused an unwelcome chain-reaction as the burdens of defence -- particularly onerous over a protracted period -- generated further discontent. In parliament in 1372, the crown was asked to reduce the numbers of men keeping the burdensome petti-wacche in the maritime counties, and a note of despair was added in the statement that the watchers, in any case, could not keep the country from the enemy's coming.²

One needs, however, to look at the course of the war as a whole to truly appreciate the reasons underlying such discontent in England. The level of English military involvement in France

1. For a comparison of English and French naval resources at this period, see C. F. Richmond, 'The War at Sea', The Hundred Years War, ed. K. A. Fowler (London, 1971), pp. 104-5.

2. Rot. Parl., ii. 314.

during the 1370s was far more intensive than at any time previously.¹ Despite the probability that material damage inflicted in France reached far higher levels than hitherto, French Fabian tactics denied the English the opportunity for victory in set battle. This lack of a signal victory had a significant effect upon contemporary Englishmen. Expeditions were costly, and the continual attempts of the crown to raise large sums for the war effort in the successive parliaments of the 1370s and 1380s were not well received, as the commons' measures to check on expenditure in the later 1370s testify. Even in the golden days of the 1340s and 1350s, moneys for the war had been granted grudgingly by the commons; the lack of 'victories' meant that Englishmen saw expenditure with no return. Worse than that, they were paying moneys to a crown which could no longer guarantee them protection at home, a fact underlined by the grim evidence of attacks on the coasts stretching from Wales to the eastern seaboard.

The one and a half year truce of Bruges from 1375 brought with it some respite, but renewal of the war in 1377 was followed by four years of increased gloom in England. The period of truce had given the French and Castilians an opportunity to increase their naval power². By early 1377 they were thus prepared to

1. For a fuller discussion of this viewpoint see Palmer, England, France and Christendom, pp. 5-6.

2. Chronique des Règnes de Jean II et Charles V, ed. R. Delachenal (4 vols., S.H.F., Paris, 1916-20), ii. 180; A.F. O'D. Alexander, 'England and the French War, 1377', (London Ph.D., 1934), pp. 29-30.

embark upon the most devastating campaigning season yet against an England numbed by the death of the Black Prince, disarrayed by affairs at home and by the loss of territories in France, and already softened up by the raids of the early 1370s.

As the truce of Bruges, scheduled to end in either April or June 1377,¹ drew to a close, plans were made for the defence of England. From January 1377, when parliament was summoned to discuss the defence of the realm,² certain defensive measures were taken. Castles such as Devizes, Hadleigh, Pembroke and Portchester were repaired and munitioned.³ In April, commissions of array for the maritime counties and for several towns were issued,⁴ while numerous writs ordering persons to retire to their lands near the coast had been issued since March.⁵ The measures, seen together, show definite undertones of panic on the part of the authorities. Panic is also reflected in the crown's uncertainty about where the enemy would land: Chichester, West Wales, Rye, and Hull were all warned that they were to be the targets.⁶ Such indecision also meant that the first provisions for naval defence were not made until after the first enemy attacks in late June.⁷

The power of the French and Castilians at sea made it clear that the land-based defensive forces were no match for them, as

1. On the termination of the truce see Alexander, op. cit., p. 24.

2. C.C.R., 1374-7, p. 429.

3. C.P.R., 1374-7, pp. 403 (Devizes), 435 (Portchester), 473 (Hadleigh), 501 (Pembroke).

4. C.P.R., 1374-7, pp. 496-500.

5. C.C.R., 1374-7, pp. 484, 487, 492, 496, 497, 498, 504.

6. C.P.R., 1374-7, p. 476 (Chichester); ibid., p. 495, C.C.R., 1374-7, p. 487 (West Wales); C.P.R., 1374-7, p. 500 (Rye); ibid., p. 502 (Hull).

7. Alexander, op. cit., pp. 44-5.

the widespread trail of destruction reflected from late June onwards. The list of places pillaged is impressive, if alarming. On 29 June, Rye was taken by a force landing from fifty ships. The town was occupied for a short while then burnt by the attackers as they withdrew.¹ On 21 August, the Isle of Wight was invaded by Jean de Vienne and a Castilian fleet, and Carisbrooke castle was besieged. Relief only came on payment of a ransom of 1,000 marks by the defenders, a course almost unheard of hitherto.² Damage done elsewhere in the Isle of Wight at this time was extensive, and even as late as 1387 many places there, 'utterly destroyed', probably as a result of the 1377 raids, were granted respite from the payment of tenths and fifteenths.³

After attacking the Isle of Wight, the French and Castilians went on to Winchelsea, where they were driven off by the abbot of Battle,⁴ and then turned to plundering all along the coasts of England. Among the places damaged were Hastings, Rottingdean, Gravesend and Stonor, while in September, Yarmouth fishermen were attacked by a small squadron of barges from Boulogne.⁵

1. Chronicon Anglie, pp. 151-2; Walsingham, Ypod. Neust., p. 327.

2. Chronicon Anglie, p. 166; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 340-1; Walsingham, Ypod. Neust., p. 327; Eulogium Historiarum, iii. 340.

3. C.C.R., 1385-9, p. 356; C.I.M., 1377-86, p. 78, no. 128; pp. 205-6, no. 384.

4. Chronicon Anglie, p. 167; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 342; Walsingham, Ypod. Neust., p. 327.

5. Chronicon Anglie, pp. 167-8, 170; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 342; Walsingham, Ypod. Neust., p. 327.

The wide extent of the destruction of the 1377 campaigning season showed that if an enemy were determined enough and had sufficient resources of ships and manpower, he could use the sea to his best advantage, so that land-based defensive forces would be no match for him. The English government had recognized this advantage by June, and arrangements were placed in hand to meet the enemy forces at sea and to counter them before any damage could be inflicted on the English coasts. The proposed expeditionary force of 4,000 men and seventy ships, in fact, never sailed. The death of Edward III on 21 June effectively prevented the fleet's sailing, and from July onwards, reliance was once again placed upon land defences.¹

This pattern of constant preparations for defence in England, accompanied by a long list of attacked or threatened places, filled the remaining years of the decade. In 1378, attacks were made on all the coasts of England. Between March and October, the coasts north of the Thames, and particularly the Scarborough region, were menaced or attacked by enemy squadrons.² In October, Fowey and other towns in Cornwall were attacked by Castilians, and large ransoms were extracted.³ In 1379, it was feared that the French would shortly destroy Scarborough, which had survived the preceding two years only by paying numerous ransoms,⁴ while shipping at sea was repeatedly under threat from enemy squadrons.⁵

1. Alexander, 'England and the French War', pp. 43-4, 48.

2. Chronicon Anglie, p. 198; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 369.

3. Rot. Parl., iii. 42; Chronicon Anglie, p. 206; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 374-5.

4. Rot. Parl., iii. 63.

5. Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 403.

The inhabitants of several towns which had recently suffered damage were prompted to beg for measures to be taken for their defence: in parliament in April 1379, for example, the men of Lynn craved permission to array themselves for defence, while those of Melcombe petitioned for a grant of murage similar to Southampton's.¹ In 1380, Winchelsea was again taken and burnt,² a fate shared in the same year by 'maritima loca Angliae multipliciter' attacked by French vessels which seem to have used ports in Ireland as bases.³

The French threat in these years was countered by the usual defensive measures, and by an unusually high incidence of building of fortifications, particularly in places near the coast. Extensions to Southampton's defences were in progress from 1377⁴, while Bath, Chichester, Hull, Portchester⁵, and a host of other places, too numerous to mention, underwent repairs between 1377 and 1380. All in all, the closing years of the 1370s witnessed a building programme in fortifications which was more intense than at any other time during the fourteenth century. The defensive forces were constantly on the alert, as is shown by the frequent

1. Rot. Parl., iii. 70.

2. Chronicon Anglie, p. 270; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 438-9; Walsingham, Ypod. Neust., p. 332.

3. Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 437-8.

4. In this period, the town was in the king's hands, following a petition of the townsfolk in 1376 (Rot. Parl., ii. 346). On the extensions, see P.R.O., E.403/463, mm. 3, 5, 6; E.403/465, m. 17; E.403/467, mm. 6, 7, 17; E.364/13, m. 7^v; E.364/14, mm. 3, 3^v; C.P.R., 1377-81, pp. 7, 9, 76, 80, 174, 264, 313, 338, 340, 446, 448, 450, 532.

5. C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 21 (Bath); *ibid.*, pp. 18, 58 (Hull); *ibid.*, p. 72 (Chichester); *ibid.*, pp. 76, 80, 100 (Portchester).

commissions of array -- some general, for the country as a whole, others, usually more detailed, for particular areas which were immediately threatened. Commissions were issued to all English counties in July 1377, February 1379, and March 1380¹, while specific commissions were issued for the Scarborough area in April 1378, for Salisbury in August of the same year, and for Cornwall in January 1379.² Naval defence was sought by the attempt to raise a fleet of balingers and barges built by certain towns in the kingdom, at their own cost, a policy introduced in parliament in 1372 and repeated in 1377³, and also by such innovations as the licensing of private squadrons to attack the enemy at sea from 1379 onwards.⁴

But despite the constant preoccupation with defence, events showed that the measures were largely ineffectual against enemy attacks upon the coast. The general downward trend of the war had a profound effect on the growth of discontent in England in the 1370s, but the damage done by enemy raiders was a constant and tangible reminder of the grimness of the era for the English. Besides the initial material damage, there were both short-term and long-term ramifications of the raids. The seeming impotence of the government to protect them led men to chafe against the authorities, and when the crown did take steps to implement defensive measures, the same men chafed under the twin burdens of prolonged military service and increased

1. Ibid., pp. 38-43, 359, 471-4.

2. Ibid., pp. 204-5 (Scarborough), 306 (Salisbury), 312 (Cornwall).

3. See below, pp. 278-80.

4. E.g., C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 405.

taxation.¹ Discontent manifested itself in the parliamentary measures mentioned above, while, in the country, discontent, aggravated by financial burdens, and in particular, by the poll-taxes of 1377, 1379, and 1381, directly contributed to dissension, which culminated in the domestic troubles of 1381.²

It is clear, then, that, for the English people, war was very much a different proposition from what it had been during the pre-Brétigny period. If, however, renewal of war brought with it a widening of the scope of French naval activity, it did not, in the 1370s, at least, bring with it invasion: the French and their allies continued to employ the hit and run tactics which they had used since the 1330s. But there were, however, signs that the pattern of attacks was changing in the 1370s. Rye was occupied in 1377, while in the same year the French laid prolonged siege to Carisbrooke castle and occupied the Isle of Wight. It is true that places such as the Channel Islands had been taken and occupied, notably between 1338 and 1345, but now for the first time parts of England herself were occupied, albeit for short periods. Moreover, since the intensity of attacks greatly increased, the growth of fears of invasion increased proportionately. Many Englishmen, among them

1. This was perhaps most significantly put in the commons' complaint in 1381 that great sums were continuously granted by them and levied for defence, yet they were not any better defended from the enemy, who continued to burn, rob and pillage unhindered (Rot. Parl., iii. 100-101).

2. On the long-term effects of defensive burdens as contributory to the Peasants' Revolt, see E. Searle and R. Burghart, 'The Defense of England and the Peasants' Revolt', Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies, iii (1972), 365-87.

the monk of Evesham, recognized that the greatest damage for forty years was being executed on the English coasts while the authorities stood powerless.¹ The repeated use of phrases such as 'pro salvacione et defensione regni ... contra invasiones ... inimicorum nostrorum' in defensive writs are of little significance, since such phrases were often no more than the simple formulae of Chancery diplomatic. But that the crown feared invasion is more positively reflected in the increased number of defensive writs and in the scope of the measures undertaken for defence in the 1370s. Whereas defence had previously been chiefly concerned with the coastal areas (and the Scottish border), the crown now began increasingly to direct inland areas to look to their defences. Towns and castles a little way inland, such as Salisbury and Winchester, were repaired and strengthened², while places such as Devizes, Oxford, Wallingford, and Windsor were also sternly fortified.³ It is probable that such fortifications were intended as second and third lines of defence.⁴ Evidently, the essence of defensive thinking by the 1370s was not simply concern for the protection of coastal places, but also the prevention of inland penetration by an enemy. In

1. Historia Vitae et Regni Ricardi II, p. 2.

2. Salisbury (C.P.R., 1377-81, pp. 9, 10); Winchester (ibid., p. 249). Strictly speaking, these places lay within the maritime lands under the twelve league limit, just outside the maritime lands under the six league limit. On the extent of the maritime lands, see pp. 90-3 below.

3. Devizes (C.P.R., 1374-7, p. 403; C.P.R., 1377-81, pp. 486, 581); Oxford (C.C.R., 1377-81, p. 51); Wallingford (C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 255); Windsor (ibid., p. 231).

4. This concept is discussed more fully below, pp. 251-3.

July 1377, for instance, stringent measures were taken for the defences of the Thames estuary and of the approaches to London.¹

A particularly significant aspect of the defensive measures taken during the 1370s, and one which has been hitherto overlooked, was the concern for the safeguarding of English towns near the Welsh border. Between 1377 and 1380, Hereford, Shrewsbury and Worcester received substantial grants of murage, a policy which was continued in the 1380s.² In June 1369, moreover, the officials of Hereford and Shrewsbury received orders to constrain the inhabitants from leaving lest the towns be left undefended³, while at the same time, the arrayers for Herefordshire were ordered not to make arrays in the town of Hereford, whose populace should remain there for self-defence.⁴ Hereford's defences were again attended to in July 1377.⁵

This concern for the defence of towns far from the coast has been viewed as indicative of a fear of a general invasion which gripped the realm during the 1370s. The real reason for such measures, however, undoubtedly lay in the recognized danger from Wales. It is certain that by the 1370s the English crown saw Wales as a region highly vulnerable (or perhaps receptive) to

1. C.C.R., 1377-81, p. 77; Rot. Parl., iii. 386. See Map 4.

2. Hereford, 4 years (1379) (C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 466), grant of stone from royal quarries for 7 years (1380) (*ibid.*, p. 563); Shrewsbury, 5 years (1380) (*ibid.*, p. 436); Worcester, 9 years (1379) (*ibid.*, p. 407).

3. C.C.R., 1369-74, pp. 23, 28.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

5. C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 5.

French designs. It feared that the French in a descent upon Wales might have received aid from the Welsh, or indeed, that the Welsh might have risen independently in support of the king's enemies. It is clear, too, that the French, on their part, saw the potential of Wales as a target for their attacks. And there was good reason for both sides to think thus. The Edwardian conquest of the late thirteenth century had placed English rule on the land, but it is clear that discontent, reflected in numerous documented references to Welsh law-breakers and in English measures to counter them¹, persisted into the fourteenth century and worsened as a result of English economic and social legislation, which was seen as abusive, and the stresses of repeated visits of the Black Death in 1349, 1361, and 1369, with its widespread desolation.² Even as early as the 1330s and 1340s the crown had showed suspicion of the Welsh, and on many instances defensive steps were taken to counter the 'lightness of head of the Welsh.'³ By the 1370s, disaffection in Wales had increased, and by the fifteenth century, the author of the Libelle of Englyshe Polycye, writing with the hindsight of the Glyndŵr

1. E.g., for cattle-raiding and attacks on Englishmen, see Rot. Parl., ii. 397; iii. 45, 272, 308; for refusal to be indent to writs of the Black Prince, see Calendar of Ancient Correspondence concerning Wales, ed. J. G. Edwards (Cardiff, 1935), pp. 247-8; further examples of discontent are traced in J. B. Smith, 'The Rebellion of Llewelyn Bren', Glamorgan County History, ed. T. B. Pugh (Cardiff, 1971), iii. 72-86; R. A. Griffiths, 'The Revolt of Llewelyn Bren', The Glamorgan Historian, ii (1965), 186-96.

2. For a fuller treatment of conditions in Wales during the fourteenth century, see W. Rees, South Wales and the March (Oxford, 1924), pp. 269 ff.

3. E.g., C.C.R., 1337-9, pp. 542-3.

rebellion, could well warn of the danger from Wales.¹ His warning was no less applicable to Wales in the final third of the fourteenth century.

There was a more immediate reason for the English to fear Wales. Among the vessels equipped by the French in Norman ports in 1369 were those of the fleet of Owen of Wales, who had espoused the French cause. Fleets under Owen were to remain a threat to Wales and the English crown until the last years of Edward III's reign.² The French may have sought to use Owen, a descendent of Llewelyn the Last, as a figurehead to incite dissident elements in Wales against the king of England³, and this, plus intelligence reports that Owen's and other French fleets -- notably that of 1377⁴ -- planned to attack Wales, naturally turned the crown's attention to the defence of that country.

1. The Libelle of Englyshe Polycye, ed. G. Warner (Oxford, 1926), p. 40.

2. Much has been written on the career of Owen. See E. Owen, 'Owen Lawgoch: Yevain de Galles,' Trans. Cymmrodorion (1899-1900), 6-105; T. M. Chotzen, 'Yvain de Galles in Alsace-Lorraine and Switzerland', Bull. Board of Celtic Studies, iv (1928), 231-40; A. D. Carr, 'Welshmen and the Hundred Years' War,' Welsh History Review, iv (1968), 21-46; P. Contamine, Guerre, État et Société à la Fin du Moyen Âge (Paris/The Hague, 1972), pp. 576-7.

3. It seems that Owen certainly had some supporters in Wales. In January 1370, for example, the arrest was ordered of Richard ap Llewelyn, for reasons not stipulated (C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 66), while later in the same year, Gruffydd Sais of Anglesey, described as a supporter of Owen of Wales, had his lands confiscated by the crown (T. M. Chotzen, Recherches sur la Poésie de Dafydd ap Gwilym (Amsterdam, 1927), p. 131).

4. Anglo-Norman Letters and Petitions in All Souls' MS. 182, ed. M. D. Legge (Oxford, 1941), pp. 162-6, no. 111.

The feared attack on Wales did not occur during the 1370s, nor was it to occur until 1404.¹ Nonetheless, the possibility of attack there remained. Thus, the holders of lands in Wales were ordered to go to them and to put them in order for defence in 1370, 1372 and in 1377.² An insight into the priority given to Wales at this time is shown in the order of February 1371 to the arrayers of Dorset to release their distraint for the garde de la mer upon the abbot of Tewkesbury, who was performing his defensive obligations in the Marches of Wales.³ Normally, defence of the south coast would have taken precedence over that of inland areas.

The greatest concern for the defence of Wales was shown in 1377, when an attack on West Wales was believed imminent. The defects of Pembroke castle were surveyed in February⁴, and in April Sir Diggory Seys, a Welsh knight, was appointed keeper with a garrison of twenty men-at-arms and twenty archers.⁵ In July

1. This was when a French fleet aided Owen Glyndŵr's sieges of Harlech and Caernarvon (Saint-Denys, iii. 164-8). Henry IV's government was well-informed of the French designs, information on the French preparations having been sent from Calais where the news had been gathered by English agents: e.g. 'quoddam magnum navigium ... in Sclusa est congregatum ... prout noster nuncius, heri de Flandria reversus nobis retulit' (Royal Letters of Henry IV, ed. F. C. Hingeston (2 vols., R.S., London, 1860-4), i. pp. 376-80, 281-2, 329-30, 333-4, 384-5).

2. C.P.R., 1369-74, pp. 158-9; C.P.R., 1370-4, p. 238; C.C.R., 1374-7, p. 487.

3. C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 214.

4. C.P.R., 1374-7, p. 501. Newport castle was put in order in April (ibid., p. 547).

5. P.R.O., E.101/34/29/1; E.403/462, m.4; C.P.R., 1374-7, p. 495. See also Appendix 10.

this garrison was increased by an additional fifty men-at-arms and fifty archers¹, plus a number of troops from the household of Sir John Joce.² Other towns and castles in the area were also strengthened: Sir Rhys ap Gruffydd was 'super salva custodia de Milford in partibus Wallie' from 28 July with fifty men-at-arms and fifty archers³; the town of Tenby and the **Hastings'** castle of Cilgerran were alerted at this time;⁴ while further east the castles of the lordship of Glamorgan were to be repaired.⁵

The large scale of defensive involvement in Wales in 1377 must be viewed in a wider context: defensive measures in England during this year were on a similarly extended scale. Nonetheless, the concern for the protection of Wales was important and remained so into the 1380s.

The pattern of intensive hit and run raids by the French continued into the 1380s, although the first half of the decade witnessed a marked decline in the numbers of attacks. 1380 saw raids on Gravesend, Hastings, Portsmouth, and Winchelsea by a large expeditionary force under Ferrand Sanchez de Tovar⁶, but

1. P.R.O., E.364/21, mm. 4-4^v; E.403/463, m.2; C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 6.

2. P.R.O., E.403/463, m.3. These troops appear to have previously been staying in defence of the lordship of Haverford.

3. P.R.O., E.101/37/5; E.403/463, m.3. Rhys' original commission of 29 July appointed him to keep the coasts of Milford and other coasts in South Wales (C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 15).

4. P.R.O., E.101/34/29/1; E.364/11, m.8^v.

5. P.R.O., E.364/22, m.2^v.

6. Chronicon Anglie, p. 270; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 438-9; Walsingham, Ypod. Neust., p. 332; Vita Ricardi II, p. 20. On the size of the fleet see Terrier de Loray, Jean de Vienne, pp. 150-1, liii-lvii; Daumet, Étude sur l'Alliance de la France et de la Castille, pp. 44-5. Eastbourne in Sussex also appears to have been raided at this time (C.C.R., 1377-81, p. 474).

naval involvement on such a scale by the French or their allies was not again to be undertaken until the troubled years of 1385-6. Civil disorder and lack of revenues in England and the minority of Charles VI in France after 1380 contributed to a de-escalation of the war. The French menace none the less continued. In June 1382, for instance, reference was made to English ships driven into ports by fear of the French at sea¹, while in 1383 a fleet of balingers was sent to harass the English coast in retaliation for the siege of Ypres by the bishop of Norwich.²

But the most unfailing testimony to the persisting fears of attack was the continued concern with defence in England. Even after a truce was concluded with the French at Leulinghen in January 1384, there was little decline in the level of defensive involvement. Clearly, the cruel lessons of the 1370s had been well learned by the English, and few chances were taken during the 1380s. The most constant sphere of involvement was that of fortifications. The West Gate at Canterbury, Cooling castle and the gatehouse at Saltwood castle, all built in the first half of the decade, and Bodiam castle, built in the latter half of the decade are the supreme examples of the programme of capital building undertaken at this time as part of the defences of the realm.³ There was also great activity on a lesser scale. At

1. C.C.R., 1381-5, p. 73.

2. Walsingham, Hist. Ang., ii. 106. This fleet was defeated at sea by a fleet raised by the men of Portsmouth and Dartmouth.

3. See B. H. St. J. O'Neil, Castles and Cannon. A Study of early Artillery Fortifications in England (Oxford, 1960), pp. 8-20.

Carisbrooke castle, for instance, provision for artillery was made in 1380 by the insertion of gunloops in the main gatehouse.¹ Repairs were also carried out between 1381 and 1384 at Dover, Hadleigh, Rye and Southampton, and at a host of other coastal places.² For coastal defence, the extraordinary measure of reliance upon private contractors was implemented in 1382 and 1383. In June 1382, Hugh Fastolf and four others were appointed to safeguard the east coast,³ while in the following June, Gilbert Manfeld, Robert Parys, John Haukyn and Thomas Horseman indented to defend the sea coasts between Winchelsea and Berwick from the preceding 24 May until Michaelmas 1384, in return for 2,500 marks and a substantial grant of the customs.⁴

Such defensive measures, apart from on one or two occasions, were taken against the contingency of general attacks rather than to meet specific dangers. The only instances of steps taken to meet particular attacks were in November 1381, when arrays were ordered in Devonshire⁵, and in June and July 1383, when provisions were made and arrays ordered for the defence of Southampton, the Isle of Wight, and other places on the south coast.⁶ Continued

1. H.K.W., ii. 594, and n.9.

2. Dover (C.C.R., 1381-5, p. 40); Hadleigh (C.P.R., 1381-5); Rye (C.C.R., 1381-5, p. 123); Southampton (C.P.R., 1381-5, pp. 280, 334).

3. C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 151.

4. C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 278.

5. C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 83.

6. C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 292; C.C.R., 1381-5, pp. 278, 281, 314.

involvement in defence makes it clear that in the 1380s, the English crown, which had been refused grants of direct taxation in three out of four parliaments between 1381 and 1383, and which, in consequence, had not the funds to wage full-scale war abroad, was therefore forced to fall back upon measures of defence to safeguard the realm.

The continuation of involvement with defences in the early 1380s proved of vital importance, since, as the truce of 1384 neared its close, England approached its greatest defensive crisis of the fourteenth century. From November 1384, the French began to put into operation plans to 'faire guerre aux ennemis d'Engleterre'¹ -- plans which had been formulated at least as early as August 1383, when the Scots had agreed to attack England on behalf of their allies, provided that the French paid them 40,000 gold florins, supplied them with equipment and supported them with 1,000 French troops.² Thus, for two years, from November 1384 to November 1386, the English were in almost constant fear of not just sporadic raids, but of full-scale

1. B.N., MS. fr. 26021/713. This phrase occurs repeatedly in documents relating to the collection of aides for the French invasion force.

2. Foedera, vii. 406-7. B.N., n.acq. fr. 7619, fos. 231^v-3^v implies, however, that the invasion plans were not laid until summer, 1384.

invasion.¹

In England in the summer of 1384 fear of renewed French attacks had been very much in the air. The ending of the original nine months of truce promulgated at Leulinghen was scheduled for the end of September. In consequence, in August the crown ordered the Treasurer to make chevance of the great sums of money required for the defence of the realm and of the Marches of Scotland and Calais.² In the following month the Cinque Ports were ordered to prepare ships to be ready to sail on the coming of enemies, and vessels going to Bordeaux were to form convoys.³ By October the position had become more tense, and the bishops were asked to ensure, through the medium of the pulpit, that the people of their dioceses were aware of the existence and gravity of the French threat.⁴

1. The events of 1384-6 have been well recorded in G. Templeman, 'Two French Attempts to Invade England during the Hundred Years' War', Studies in French Language, Literature and History presented to R. L. G. Ritchie, ed. F. Mackenzie, R. C. Knight and J. M. Milner (Cambridge, 1949), pp. 225-38, whose account is here substantially followed. The great invasion scare of 1386 is also dealt with in Palmer, England, France and Christendom, pp. 67-87, which although it almost completely ignores the invasion scare of 1385, is invaluable for the political and diplomatic background of the crises. See especially L. Mirot, 'Une Tentative d'Invasion en Angleterre pendant la Guerre de Cent Ans', Revue des Études Historiques, lxxxi (1915), 249-87, 416-66, which is of fundamental importance to any study of the period.

2. C.C.R., 1381-5, p. 472.

3. Ibid., pp. 467, 480-1.

4. Foedera, vii. 444-5.

The first realization of French intentions came about with the sailing of one French force of 1,500 lances to Scotland under Jean de Vienne, while a second French force under Olivier de Clisson, constable of France, prepared to invade the south coast.¹ But even before the vessels which had been prepared in Norman ports sailed in May 1385 to Sluys, whence Jean de Vienne's detachment departed north and where de Clisson's fleet underwent its final preparations,² there was a stepping-up of defensive measures in England. In January 1385, a very detailed commission of array was issued for Kent, and similar commissions were sent to every English county in April as danger became more imminent.³ Between April and June a number of towns, among them Canterbury, Gloucester, and Norwich, likewise held arrays of their inhabitants.⁴ Extensive activity in fortifications occurred during the early months of the year: on 18 January, the warden of the Cinque Ports was instructed to levy a subsidy of 1d. on each basket of fish entering the ports, the moneys to be spent on the ports' defences⁵; at Norwich, ditches were scoured and walls repaired⁶;

1. Chron. Ang., p. 364; Knighton, ii. 204; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., ii. 128; Walsingham, Ypod. Neust., p. 341.

2. On the preparations of the French fleet at Sluys, see B.N., MS. fr. 26021/715, 717, 719, 720, 721, 722, etc; ibid., n.acq. fr., 3653, p. 62, no. 360; n.acq. fr., 7619, fos. 229-30, 231, 231^v; Arch. Dép., Nord, B. 1843/50184 (Finance for expeditions); B.N., MS. fr. 26021/694, 710, 728, 733, 734, 737, etc.; ibid., n.acq. fr., 1433, fos. 22, 24; Arch. Dép., Nord, B. 3364/113232 (supplies and arms); B.N., MS. fr. 26021/724, 742; ibid., n.acq. fr., 7619, fos. 211-12 (Troops and Shipping).

3. C.P.R., 1381-5, pp. 588-91.

4. Ibid., pp. 597-8.

5. Ibid., p. 518.

6. Ibid., p. 546.

while guns and engines were to be installed for the defence of Canterbury¹. A host of other coastal towns and castles were also attended to.²

In total, the defensive measures betray a panic which has been minimized by other writers.³ From the crown's reaction, it is certain that it was believed that the French were not merely intent upon ordinary raids. This time it was to be invasion. Evidence of the crown's deep concern is best seen in a writ of 14 January, ordering the strengthening of Rye. Here it was stated that the king had information that the enemy were going to seize and fortify Rye.⁴ This was not just the language of propaganda: it is true that it was normal for the crown's defensive writs to outline the attendant horrors of an expected French attack, but rarely hitherto were the warnings couched in such explicit terms. Clearly, the authorities feared invasion and that the French were planning to take Rye and perhaps put it to the same use as the

1. Ibid., p. 597.

2. E.g., *ibid.*, pp. 519, 525, 543, 545, 551, 556, 574; *C.C.R.*, 1381-5, pp. 510, 519, 549, etc.

3. E.g., Templeman, *op. cit.*, p. 227. His statement that 'Richard II's horrific account of what the French proposed to do cannot be taken as a sober estimate of the enemy's purpose. It was a propagandist formula ...' is valid when viewed in a general context. It is not, however, applicable to warnings such as that contained in the writ of January to Rye. See below, n. 4.

4. *C.P.R.*, 1381-5, p. 519.

English had with Calais since its capture in 1347.¹ Other unusual defensive measures also reflect the panic. On 11 April, for example, the king commanded that all persons dwelling in the Isles of Thanet and Oxeney, and those living within six miles of Dover castle, Rye or Sandwich, should withdraw to these places for safety.² Such instructions, which would result in the depopulation of these coastal areas, were rare. Hitherto, the crown would have taken pains to ensure that the inhabitants of such coastal areas would have remained there for defence. Now, it seems, the crown chose to amass its manpower within a small number of fortified points. While this may have been an admission of the crown's inability to protect the inhabitants of the coastal tract, it is more probable that these withdrawal orders were in keeping with the scorched earth policy, decided upon by the council in the following year, whereby the French would be allowed to penetrate inland for three or four days, and then a counter-attack would be made upon their fleet in the hope of destroying it.³ A more positive sign of bad times was the crown's readiness to permit Swanage and Studland in the Isle of Purbeck, which 'sont assises sur la meer et ne poont estre sauvez ne gardez', to pay ransom should an enemy attack, 'pour meismes les villes sauver sans empeschement de nous, ou de noz heirs, ou de noz ministres.'⁴

1. The value to the French if they had possessed an English town in the same manner as the English held Calais has been noted in C. F. Richmond, 'The War at Sea', The Hundred Years' War, ed. Fowler, p. 100. Dover is instanced. In 1386 the French intended to establish a beachhead, as 'une sorte de Calais sur le rivage britannique', by the erection of a prefabricated wooden fort (L. Puiseux, 'Étude sur une grande Ville de Bois construite en Normandie pour une Expédition en Angleterre en 1386', Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie, xxv, 9).

2. C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 553.

3. Froissart, xi. 373.

4. P.R.O., C.81/489/3609; C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 554. See Appendix 11.

But defence of the south coast was only one of the problems facing the government: there was also the threat to the north by the combined Franco-Scottish force under Jean de Vienne. Throughout June and July, preparations were made for the raising of an army at Newcastle, and in early August, Richard II marched into Scotland at the head of that army.¹ While Richard was in the north, he did not neglect the defences of the southern coasts. On 28 June, the sheriff of Hampshire was ordered to proclaim that all with lands in the shire should go there for their defence, while on the 30th, the arrayers of Sussex were ordered to speed up their array.² On 28 July, principal captains and leaders of men-at-arms, archers and hobelars were appointed for the safety of the south of England.³

Despite such elaborate defensive precautions, the attacks in the south did not come. That they did not was not in any sense due to the efficiency or deterrent powers of the English defensive system. In early July, the Gantois captured the port of Damme, thereby necessitating the diversion of Charles VI's invasion forces, which were due to embark for England on 1 August, to the relief of the fallen port.⁴ Thus danger to the southern

1. C.P.R., 1381-5, pp. 485, 570, 573, 574, 579; C.C.R., 1381-5, pp. 555, 556-7, 637; C.P.R., 1385-9, p. 23; N. B. Lewis, 'The Last Medieval Summons of the English Feudal Levy, 13 June 1385', E.H.R., lxxiii (1958), 1-26; contrasting with J. J. N. Palmer, 'The Last Summons of the Feudal Army in England, 1385', E.H.R., lxxxiii (1968), 771-5.

2. C.P.R., 1385-9, p. 6.

3. C.P.R., 1385-9, p. 80.

4. Puiseux, 'Étude sur une grande Ville de Bois', pp. 22-3.

parts of England had been removed, and freedom from attack in this quarter allowed Richard II to concentrate on his retaliatory campaign in Scotland.¹ Nonetheless, the combined Franco-Scottish threat had been the gravest with which the English had yet to contend during the fourteenth century. Even so, the events of the following year were to prove even more critical.

The final surrender of Ghent in December 1385 brought Flanders completely under French control, and enabled Charles VI to concentrate unhindered on launching a more serious invasion project. In this year (in the words of the poet, Eustache Deschamps), the Norman Conquest was to be repeated.² Furthermore, the organization of the 1385 invasion force stood the French in good stead for the newly-planned invasion attempt. Commissariat arrangements, for instance, were continued at Sluys during the closing quarter of 1385, under the guidance of royal officials who had been there throughout the year.³ Throughout the early months of 1386, activity intensified and a build-up from July and August onwards was seen at Sluys, and in the ports of Brittany, Normandy and Picardy. Three fleets, totalling 900 vessels, were raised in Brittany, Normandy and Picardy and were

1. Templeman, op. cit., p. 230.

2. Oeuvres Complètes d'Eustache Deschamps, ed. A. de Queux de Sainte-Hilaire and G. Raynaud (Paris, 1839), p. 74, no. mcxlv. In his 'conseil de descente en Angleterre', he urges:-
'Princes, passez sanz point de demourée:
Vostres sera le pays d'Angleterre;
Autre fois l'a un Normant conquestée:
Vaillant cuer puet en tous temps faire guerre.'

3. B.N., MS. fr. 26021/788,801.

then to be sent to Sluys to embark a fighting force estimated at 30,000 men for the invasion of England.¹ The Flemish port of Sluys was too small to accommodate such a force for its necessarily protracted period of mobilization. Consequently, preparations were made in gradual steps. The fleets, collected at Tréguier and Saint-Malo by de Clisson, at Harfleur by Jean de Vienne, and at the mouth of the Somme by the Sire de Sempy, were transferred to Sluys and the Zwin estuary between 23 July and the beginning of October. The troops raised also approached Sluys in stages, before the final congregation of the army prior to embarkation. For example, crossbowmen raised in the villages of the vicomté of Bayeux first mustered at Harfleur in August.² Retinues of many captains were first reviewed in September, some at Sluys, but most at places such as Amiens, Arras, Lille, Bruges and Damme, and even as far afield as Troyes, Mantes and Reims.³ It was intended that they should move into the vicinity of Sluys as final preparations drew to a head. The retinue of the count of Valentinois, for example, first reviewed at Arras on 17 October, was at Sluys by 11 November, while that of Guichard Daulphin, first mustered at Neufvirolles near Douai on 11 October, was at Sluys by 16 November.

1. Relig. de Saint-Denys, i. 428 (fleets). The figure 30,000 is accepted by Palmer, England, France and Christendom, p. 74, following the evidence of the Chroniques de Tournai. From B.N., MS. Clairambault 841, pp. 190-385, a figure of 16,000 may be adduced, although the MS. by no means gives the complete total of men serving in the invasion force. Such a complete total would be impossible to estimate accurately.

2. B.N., MS. fr. 26021/926; Arch. Dép., Calvados, MS. F. 1284 (Danquin 40). These were clad in a uniform comprising 'un petit secot court et un chapperon mepartis', in blue and red.

3. B.N., MS. Clairambault 841, pp. 190-385.

To feed such a growing force and to supply the expedition when under way, vast quantities of biscuit, salted fish, wheat, wine and other victuals were collected from places as diverse as Abbeville, Bruges, Dunkirk, Lille, and from many other places in northern France.¹ So great were the quantities that in October there were insufficient ships in Le Crotoy for the conveyance of supplies to Sluys.² Large quantities of arms and artillery for the fleet were also accumulated.³ From official sources, it is evident that a prolonged stay in England was envisaged. Much attention was paid to the duke of Burgundy's tents⁴, while the securing of a beachhead was assured by the construction of a prefabricated wooden fort, twenty feet high, 3,000 paces in circumference, with towers at intervals of twenty paces.⁵ Constructed in several places in Brittany and Normandy, seventy-two ships were required to convey it in sections to Sluys, although some sections were captured by English shipping from Calais and allegedly sent to Sandwich,

1. E.g., B.N., MS. fr. 26021/554, 896, 924, 942; Arch. Dép., Nord, B.3260/112812; B.3366/11365, 113366, 113367, 113369-75.

2. B.N., MS. fr. 26022/953.

3. E.g., B.N., MS. fr. 26021/881, 882, 888, 918, 925, 967; *ibid.*, n.acq. fr. 3654, pp. 14-15, no. 102; Arch. Dép., Seine-Maritime, Fonds Danquin, carton v, liasse 3, pièce 58.

4. Arch. Dép., Nord, B.1844/50210, 50213, 50215; B.3366/11368.

5. Walsingham, Hist. Ang., ii. 147; Knighton, ii. 212.

where they were incorporated in the defences.¹

In England, the possibility of another invasion attempt and the preparations in France and Flanders did not go unheeded. For the English, 1386 had begun with slight promise. Negotiations with Charles VI, under the mediation of King Leo of Armenia, had commenced in December 1385, but were doomed to failure by the following March.² Despite faint glimmers of hope during the early months of the year, the English, warned by the events of 1385, did not neglect their defences.

Measures taken for defence during the first half of 1386 were precautionary ones on a low key. In March, as negotiations were clearly seen to be fruitless, commissions of array were issued for all English counties.³ It was clearly explained to the arrayers that should any mishaps occur, they would bear the responsibility for failure. Fortresses and coastal towns such as Rye (March), Canterbury (April), Portchester (April), Great Yarmouth (May), Sandwich (April), and Trematon castle (April-June), were strengthened in case of attack.⁴ Persons living within six miles of Dover Castle, Rye or Sandwich, were ordered, in April, that they were to retire to these places in

1. Saint-Denys, i. 450.; Froissart, xii. 19; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., ii. 147; Knighton, ii. 212; Chronicon Anglie, p. 371; Arch. Dép., Seine-Maritime, Fonds Danquin, carton ii, liasse 1, pièce 70; Puiseux, 'Étude sur une grande ville de bois', pp. 22, 25.

2. For details of the diplomatic background to these negotiations, see Palmer, England, France and Christendom, pp. 68-71.

3. C.C.R., 1385-9, p. 60.

4. C.P.R., 1385-9, pp. 123 (Rye), 132 (Canterbury), 134 (Portchester), 135 (Great Yarmouth), 140 (Sandwich), 172-4 (Trematon).

the event of attack.¹ At sea, the two admirals kept up regular patrols from February onwards, while large fleets from the north and west were to put to sea in April for the security of the realm.² In France, the defences of the English fortresses of Calais, Brest, and Cherbourg were attended to.³

In June and July there was a decline in defensive activity following the lull which had occurred in the French preparations in May and June, a lull probably caused in part by the duke of Burgundy's illness. In September, however, as the French preparations approached their zenith, consequent fear in England saw a renewal in earnest of defensive activity. Oral instructions for defence were sent to the port of Orwell; Portsmouth, Rochester and many other towns were alerted,⁴ while municipal officials in a great number of towns, both on the coast and inland, were commissioned to array the inhabitants between September and November.⁵ Naval defence was provided for by a large fleet stationed in the Thames estuary.⁶

The most significant of the defensive measures taken was an innovative scheme of September. On the 12th, the arrayers in all shires save those on the coast between Norfolk and

1. C.P.R., 1385-9, p. 175.

2. P.R.O., C.76/70, mm. 10, 16, 29; E.364/3, m. 16^v; E.364/7, m.45^v; E.403/510, m. 29; E.403/512, mm. 2, 3, 4, 8.

3. C.C.R., 1385-89, pp. 45, 50, 61.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 214.

5. E.g., Norwich (C.C.R., 1385-9, p. 261), Scarborough (*ibid.*, p. 263), Colchester (*ibid.*, p. 260).

6. P.R.O., E.403/512, m.19; C.C.R., 1385-9, p. 169.

Hampshire, the border shires, and Cornwall, were ordered to send specified numbers of archers to London by Michaelmas, there to join the royal army raised to counter invasion.¹ North Wales and the great palatinates of Chester and Lancaster, were likewise to contribute archers. The numbers specified varied from between ~~forty~~ from Rutland to 1,000 in each of Chester and Lancaster, and totalled 5,720 archers. Mismanagement doomed the venture to failure. Unruly behaviour by the troops raised caused the Council to advise that archers levied in shires within fifty miles of London return home and remain there until further orders.² The probable cause of this was that payment of the archers, deemed in a writ of 2 October as to be at the cost of their own counties, was not forthcoming.³ In consequence, after some inconclusive attempts to rectify matters, the levies were sent home to their counties on the 11th, with the proviso that they remain in readiness and that their sheriffs pay them three weeks' wages when next they were summoned.⁴ The employment of selective arrays for purely defensive purposes was an extremely rare occurrence, it being more normal to make general levies in such cases. That this scheme was a new idea is seen in its gross mismanagement: clearly, insufficient thought had been given to it beforehand. It is certain that such a measure was born out of the current

1. C.P.R., 1385-9, pp. 217, 242.

2. C.C.R., 1385-9, p. 194.

3. Ibid., p. 187.

4. Ibid., pp. 187, 193-4.

situation. The view of the crown may have been that it envisaged countering an invasion force in set battle, hence the need for archers, who had proved themselves in the Edwardian battles, and more recently at Aljubarotta. Previous French attacks had been mere raids: now for the second time in two years the possibility of occupation by an invading army presented itself, and the crown, forewarned by the threat of 1385, realized that occupation by a large enemy force in 1386 could only be resolved by defeating that force in pitched battle. Substance is given to this theory by Froissart's mention of the English defensive strategy, which the enemy would be allowed to penetrate inland for several days, an attempt to destroy his fleet would then be made in the hope of cutting off his escape route, although then, according to the chronicle, the English forces would not immediately fight with the French, but would harry them by Fabian tactics.¹

In October, the situation worsened for the English, with the French poised to attack, and with constitutional troubles at home reaching a climax in the 'Wonderful Parliament'. But the minutely planned and greatly feared invasion, expected in early November, never came. Charles VI left Sluys on 16 November and arrived in Paris in early December. The invading army gradually melted away. In England, the crown, ever wary, continued to implement defensive measures into late November,²

1. See above, p. 67, n. 3.

2. E.g., the commission of array for Scarborough was issued on 28 November. See above, p. 73, n. 5.

although by December the danger was recognized as over.

The reasons for the armada's never sailing have formed a subject of controversy. The Chronicon Angliae states that the fleet did in fact sail, but was dispersed by storm.¹ Others have ascribed it to the opposition and late arrival of the duke of Berry or to the late date of the final mobilization.² More recently, Dr. Palmer has convincingly argued that a combination of 'diplomatic, military, financial and natural factors' coupled with an acute reading of the current diplomatic situation by the French, led to the abandonment of the invasion attempt.³ Whatever the true reason, the fact remains that the English had been severely shaken by the threat of 1386, as well as by that of 1385. In two successive years invasion had been threatened and had not come about because of external factors, and not because of the deterrent strength of the English defensive system. If the evidence of mismanagement and panic in England is anything to go by, then the French may, indeed, have succeeded in their invasion attempt. Certainly they could have effected a landing, but whether they could have capitalized upon an occupation of England is a matter of the widest speculation.

The concluding years of the war before the truce of 1389 were not again to witness threats of such enormity. After two years of

1. Chron. Ang., p. 373.

2. Froissart, xii. 19-28; Le Songe du Vieil Pèlerin of Philippe de Mézières, Chancellor of Cyprus, ed. G. W. Coopland (2 vols., Cambridge, 1969), ii. 437.

3. England, France and Christendom, pp. 76-81.

protracted offensive involvement, France had exhausted herself both militarily and financially. Despite a promise to launch another invasion attempt in 1387, lack of resources precluded Charles VI from doing so. In England, the transfer of real power to Gloucester and Arundel was immediately accompanied in 1387 by a policy of attack.

Nevertheless, the council was taking no chances in 1387. Apart from intensive naval activity in raising a fleet to be led by Arundel in the campaigning season¹, there was also some concern in July for the defence of the south coast, when the sheriff and municipal officials in Hampshire were warned to be on the alert for enemy landings.² Evidently the authorities were alarmed by preparation of fleets under Jean de Vienne and de Clisson at Harfleur and Tréguier. These small fleets, which clearly did not match the threats of the two preceding years, never, in fact, sailed.³

The formation of these fleets was to represent the last serious threat to the English coasts by the French during the fourteenth-century phase of the Hundred Years War. Although the English suffered defeat by the Scots at Otterburn in August 1388, no more French attacks were forthcoming. The tentative peace negotiations of late 1387, then the war-policy of the Appellants in 1388, and finally the renewed peace negotiations from 1389 to 1394 saw to that.

1. P.R.O., C.76/71, mm. 3, 6, 7, 13; E.364/21, m.6^v; C.C.R., 1385-9, pp. 197, 208, 308-9.

2. C.C.R., 1385-9, p. 329.

3. On the reasons for the abandoning of the expedition, see Palmer, England, France and Christendom, pp. 98-9.

PART TWO

THE ORGANIZATION OF DEFENCE AND ITS VARIOUS ASPECTS

CHAPTER FOUR

THE OBLIGATIONS OF DEFENCE AND THE COASTAL REGION

In the progress of attack and defence described in Part I of this study, some kind of set pattern of defensive measures implemented in England during periods of crisis is clearly seen. The pattern is, to a large extent, clear cut, and it is possible to draft a list of the main steps which were taken for the defence of the realm. Many of the measures summarized in the following five paragraphs were not employed on each and every occasion; listed are measures which could be taken, and the ones which were most likely to be taken whenever danger threatened. Some, such as the prohibition on the export of arms, victuals and bullion, or the importation of prejudicial letters, and other akin security measures occurred on almost every occasion of crisis. Others, such as the plea of the crown to the clergy to pray for the safety of the realm, only occurred in times of acute peril, particularly when the king wished to exhort the populace to do their utmost for the defence of the realm. The second part of this study attempts to analyse the constituent aspects of the system of national defence during the fourteenth century.

Prominent among the steps taken at any one time when the security of the realm was threatened by enemy attack was the issue of commissions appointing officials to take charge of defensive matters. On land the

principal of these were the keepers of the maritime lands and the commissioners of array; at sea, the main officials were the royal admirals of the north and west and their deputies. The appointment of the defensive officials on land was always accompanied by instructions for the mobilization through the medium of commissions of array of the local defensive forces which comprised all able bodied males aged between sixteen and sixty. The writs appointing the leaders of the defenders and authorizing mobilization of the local levies were accompanied by, or sometimes preceded by, writs which warned of the enemy's intentions, warnings which could take several forms. Appointments of local defensive officials also provided for the maintenance of watches along the coast and the erection of beacons.

Together with the measures taken for mobilization were those implemented by the crown to ensure that the coastal region was not ~~devoid~~ of potential defenders. Steps were normally taken to compel persons owning lands in the coastal counties to go there and remain there for the defence of the realm, unless they were performing such service elsewhere. Moreover, the threat of attack often led to the withdrawal inland of the coastal populations, so the crown frequently instructed local officials such as the sheriff to proclaim against persons leaving the maritime area and to order those who had left to return there immediately, using compulsion if necessary.

Defensive crises also witnessed great activity in the field of fortifications. Castles and fortified towns were placed in a state of defence by reinforcements to and supplies for their garrisons, and also by repairs and extensions to their defences. Works at fortresses necessitated the supply of building materials and of workmen to carry out the repairs. Consequently, arrests of craftsmen and labourers and

the purveyance of building materials together with carriage were frequent occurrences in the event of a defensive crisis. For the defence of the realm at sea, ships, seamen, and supplies were arrested.

Apart from the measures taken for physical defence against attacks, steps were taken to tighten security, particularly in the coastal counties. In order to prevent leakage of information to the enemy, the ports were usually closed, and persons prevented from leaving the realm except via Dover. Aliens living in the coastal area, and particularly those of enemy nationality, were usually removed to inland areas or incarcerated during the period of disturbance, and stern measures were adopted against enemy agents at work within the realm¹.

Frequently, a defensive crisis provoked the crown to seek financial support from the commons towards the costs of defence, and assemblies could be convened not just for the purpose of raising finances, but also for the crown to benefit from advice on defence proffered by the commons, the local representatives of the inhabitants of the coastal shires, or by the men of the Cinque Ports. The above description is only intended as an outline to give some indication of what defensive measures could be adopted in times of danger. It is now proposed to treat with the various aspects of the defensive system in greater detail in this and the ensuing chapters.

The most important feature of the system of national defence against continental enemies during the fourteenth century were the general

1. J. R. Alban and C. T. Allmand, 'Spies and Spying in the Fourteenth Century', War, Literature, and Politics in the Late Middle Ages, ed. C. T. Allmand (Liverpool, 1976), p.92.

measures taken for the defence of the coast or the garde de la mer. In its essence, the system of defence revolved around the defensive forces employed for the protection of the coastal area. The foundations upon which such a system was based were to be found in the general obligation of every able-bodied adult man to perform military service in the defence of his locality. The obligation, based on the vague, yet natural, concept that each man had a duty to perform military service in defence of home and hearth, had its roots in the military organization of Anglo-Saxon England. This defensive obligation, which has been discussed at length and carefully defined elsewhere¹, had been regularized in part by statute over the centuries following the Norman Conquest. The Assize of Arms of 1181 and the Statute of Winchester of 1285 had sought to regularize the obligations to the bearing of arms in defence. The reigns of the first three Edwards had witnessed attempts by the crown at extending the obligations of military service². Such attempts had often provoked opposition from the commons and, in consequence, the crown had, on occasions, been obliged to grant certain concessions. In 1327, for instance, it was decreed that no man should be compelled to serve outside his native shire except where necessity required it, or 'on the sudden coming of enemies into the realm'³.

Basically, by the commencement of the Hundred Years' War in the 1330s, the forces available to the crown for the defence of the realm were raised

1. M. R. Powicke, Military Obligation in Medieval England (Oxford, 1962), passim.

2. Ibid., pp.118-65; G. L. Harriss, King, Parliament, and Public Finance in Medieval England to 1369 (Oxford, 1975), pp.87-97.

3. Stats. Realm, i. 255.

chiefly through this general obligation to perform defensive military service, as tempered by the Statute of Winchester and by the developments in the field of the communal array which had taken place since the reign of Edward I¹. The obligation to serve, with arms sufficient to their status according to the Statute of Winchester, fell upon all fencible males between the ages of sixteen and sixty, who were mobilized into a fighting body by means of the commission of array². Even the clergy was not exempt from the performance of such service, although they were frequently arrayed separately from the laymen of the county³. The force or posse comitatus raised in the county by this method was available both for defensive service and for the keeping of the peace in the localities. Indeed, there was, to contemporaries, very little difference between these two functions. 'Defence of the realm' implied as much the protecting of the realm from the malice of lawbreakers within as it did from the hostile designs of foreign enemies without.

The men liable for such service, once arrayed, were organized within their local hundreds, which became the basic unit of the defensive levies. Within these units, they were commanded at the lowest levels by officials with whom they would have come into daily contact through other aspects of local administration -- the constables of the hundred. The hundred units were, in the words of Searle and Burghart, the 'raw material' of the posse comitatus⁴ and, as such were, in their defensive role, placed under the ultimate charge of the royal commissioners

1. Powicke, Military Obligation, pp. 118 ff.

2. Stubbs, Select Charters, pp. 463-9.

3. E.g., C.C.R., 1381-5, pp.1, 551, etc.; Westminster Abbey Muniment Room, Liber Niger Book I, fo. 87. I am grateful to Dr. J.J.N. Palmer for bringing the latter reference to my attention.

4. E. Searle and R. Burghart, 'The Defense of England and the Peasants' Revolt', Viator, iii (1972), 367.

appointed for defence. The principal of these were the commissioners of array and, in the period of war up to the early 1370s, the keepers of the maritime lands in the coastal shires.

Although the local levies were employed by the English crown as a peace-keeping force, for military service overseas as well as for home defence, it is on their defensive role that this study will concentrate. The levies raised by the obligation of communal military service -- the jurati ad arma -- were the main source from which the crown drew its forces for the defence of the realm, but there were other sources. Feudal service, which had proved unsatisfactory to the warlike needs of the English kings even in the thirteenth century, did not feature in coastal defence during the period under consideration. Indeed, for the defence of the coast the crown had always drawn upon the service of the fyrð rather than upon that of its feudal tenants. The feudal host had, however, been summoned for the Scottish campaign of 1327 and was summoned again for the last time by Richard II in 1385 for his counter-offensive against the Franco-Scottish attack on the northern shires¹.

Rather, the crown sought to assess military service and the provision of numbers of defenders relating thereto on the basis of income and the extent of landholding. Although the first three Edwards had attempted to extend the obligation to military service on a wealth basis, it was from 1344 that such a practice occurred with regularity². In October 1344, persons with lands between the value of 100s and £1,000 were to be assessed to provide troops in proportion to the value of

1. N.B. Lewis, 'The Last Summons of the English Feudal Levy, 13 June 1385', E.H.R., lxxiii (1958), 1-26, for a corrected interpretation see J.J.N. Palmer, 'The Last Summons of the Feudal Army in England, 1385', E.H.R., lxxxiii (1968), 771-5.

2. For a fuller discussion see Powicke, Military Obligation, pp.187 ff.

their lands¹. Frequently, agistments to arms stipulated the types and numbers of troops which each man was to provide in relation to his landholdings. In Middlesex in c. 1338, for instance, persons with lands worth £10 were assessed at one armed footman, while those with 40s. in lands were to provide an archer².

The obligation to provide men in relation to one's land was further extended by the compulsion upon local land owners and others to retire to their estates near the sea whenever danger threatened for the defence of the coasts. The Chancery rolls abound with such instructions to land owners to repair to their coastal estates without delay. In 1340, for instance, the priors of Christchurch and St. Augustine's at Canterbury were ordered to go to their lands near the sea with all haste, and to remain there while the danger lasted³. A severe crisis such as that of 1385-6 often resulted in the sending of such instructions to large numbers of land owners⁴. The principle of sending men to their coastal lands for defence was also applicable to the defence of the northern borders, and for the internal security of Wales and Ireland. The bishop of Durham was ordered to repair to his lands nearest the border in 1372 and 1377, while a general proclamation was made in 1372 that all persons with lands on the Scottish border should do likewise; in 1370, 1377, and 1385 landholders in Wales were ordered to retire to their lands there; while troubles in Ireland in 1361 led to similar

1. C.P.R., 1343-5, pp. 414-16.

2. Greater London R.O., Acc. 1085, F.P. 9, m. 2^v. See Appendix 6.

3. P.R.O., C. 76/15, m.7.

4. E.g., C.C.R., 1381-5, pp. 278, 538, 539.

instructions applicable to the landholders in that country¹.

From time to time these orders bore the specific instruction that each man should go to his manor nearest the sea, and clearly such commands were expected to be carried out to the letter. The case of the abbot of Bury reveals just how stringently these orders were to be adhered to. In June 1377, the abbot was distrained by the arrayers in Suffolk for not residing for defence in the manor of Worlingworth, which was his manor nearest the sea. On 13 June, however, a royal licence was granted allowing him to remain at his manor of Elmswell, which, although further from the sea, was more easily accessible to it than Worlingworth, from where the roads were bad. The licence was regranted by Richard II in July 1377².

The penalties for non-observance of such instructions were grave, usually involving distraints placed on the lands and chattels of the transgressor by the local defensive officials. The case of the distraint upon the abbot of Bury mentioned above was by no means unique. There were, however, instances when such coercive measures were unfair. Persons serving the king on campaigns overseas, or who were performing defensive service in other coastal counties would obviously be unable to fulfil in person their obligations elsewhere. In 1338, Roger Normand was granted a respite from performing personal defensive service 'for his having for no small time found at his own costs divers ships of war and armed men both on land and sea for the king's service in defence of the realm'³. The years 1346-7 saw a large number of respites from

1. C.C.R., 1369-74, pp.361-2, C.C.R., 1374-7, p.6 (Scotland); C.C.R., 1369-74, p.158, C.C.R., 1374-7, p.487, C.C.R., 1381-5, p.549 (Wales); C.C.R., 1360-4, pp.253, 278 (Ireland).

2. C.C.R., 1374-7, p.504; C.C.R., 1377-81, p.83.

3. C.P.R., 1338-40, pp.56, 171, 252.

providing men-at-arms and hobelars for coastal defence granted to men serving with the king abroad ¹. In many cases, the persons distrained for non-performance of defensive service were requested to prove that they had performed alternative service elsewhere. Thus the petition of Thomas de Vere in 1347 was accompanied by the certification that 'le comte de Norhampton tesmoigne que Thomas de Veer passa la meer ove nostre seignour le roi, et arriva a Hogges et demora es parties de Fraunce tanques a la revenue nostre dit seignour en Engleterre'; Henry Husee, keeper of the Isle of Wight, testified in 1346 that a man-at-arms, for which the abbot of Dartford was distrained by the arrayers of Hampshire, was indeed serving in the island ². Frequently, respite from personal service in a specified county was granted, with the proviso that the requisite number of men be found for local defence there. Thus in 1371 John Pecche, himself serving in the defence of London, was respited from personally serving in his Kentish lands, on the condition that he provided the necessary number of troops there ³.

One sees that the bulk of the defenders of the coastal areas were raised by commissions of array or by royal orders compelling them to retire to their coastal estates. Such forces were chiefly used for the protection of open stretches of coastline, but were occasionally used to strengthen the defences of important coastal places such as towns. The nature of the Franco-Castilian hit-and-run tactics during the fourteenth century meant that coastal towns, as the most convenient targets for naval raids, bore the brunt of enemy attacks. Thus, in towns, extra measures were taken for defence. In many places, the burgesses

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1. P.R.O., C. 81/1760/5-11, 13-74. See also Appendices 7 & 8.
 2. P.R.O., C. 81/1760/15 (Vere); C. 76/23, m. 22 (abbot).
 3. C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 239.

were empowered to array themselves for defence¹. At many others, a regular garrison was installed. Within the garrisons of coastal towns and fortresses (and on the northern March and in the 'barbicans' in France) contract troops raised by indenture were normally used. The size of such garrisons varied from place to place and from time to time. Taking several fortresses at random in 1339-40, one sees that their garrisons were as follows: Carisbrooke castle, six men-at-arms, four hobelars, eight archers; Corfe castle, six men-at-arms, six archers; Dover castle, twenty men-at-arms, forty armed men, forty archers; Portchester castle, ten men-at-arms, forty archers; Winchester castle, twenty men-at-arms, twenty archers².

The numbers of contract troops in a garrison were often increased during the war season of summer or in periods of crisis. Thus the garrison of Portsmouth town under its keeper, Warin de l'Isle, in 1369 numbered fifteen knights, twenty-seven esquires, and fifty-three archers until 26 August, when it was augmented by a further ninety-five armed men and two-hundred archers. By October, the garrison had reverted to its original numbers³.

Although contract troops were chiefly used in the garrisons of towns and castles, where the nature of garrison service made the jurati

1. See Ch. VII and Appendix 9.

2. C.C.R., 1339-41, p. 354 (Carisbrooke); *ibid.*, p. 411 (Corfe); P.R.O., C. 76/14, m. 6 (Dover); C.C.R., 1339-41, p. 65 (Portchester); *ibid.*, p. 7 (Winchester).

3. P.R.O., E. 364/3, mm. 4^v, 5^v; E. 364/5, m. 29; E. 364/6, m. 5.

ad arma unsuitable to such a role, troops raised by indenture were occasionally, although infrequently, used for the defence of the open coast. This was the case in Kent in 1385, but such instances were rare, and only occurred in times of extreme danger¹. Also infrequently, troops raised by selective arrays in inland shires and intended for overseas service were redirected to the defence of the coasts in time of emergency. Thus in August 1356, 120 archers originally bound for France were redirected to the defence of the maritime areas of Kent and Sussex².

Despite the various methods by which troops were raised for the defence of the realm, it was the local levies of the shire, raised under their communal obligation to perform defensive service, which formed the backbone of the defensive forces who carried out the garde de la mer in the coastal shires. We now turn to the machinery of the defensive system within the coastal counties.

Whatever measures were taken for the defence of the realm, the most immediately important were those implemented for the safeguarding of the coastal places. As inhabitants of an island kingdom, the English had long recognized the vulnerability of the coast and its hinterland to the attacks of enemies coming by sea. In consequence, by the fourteenth century a concept had developed that the zone running parallel to the

1. Thomas Tryvet served in defence of the coast there between May and June with six knights, forty-three esquires, and fifty archers (P.R.O., E.101/531/40; E. 403/508, m.4).

2. P.R.O., C. 76/34, m.7.

coast and extending several miles inland was a special area. This coastal zone, known by the fourteenth century as the 'maritime lands' or terre maritime, had developed an individual identity in matters of defence which set it apart from the rest of the shire in which it lay. Under specially appointed royal officials, known as the custodes terre maritime or keepers of the maritime lands, (although by the 1370s the powers of these officials had been transferred to commissioners of array), the inhabitants of the ill-defined coastal zone were required to perform their customary military service in defence of the coastal area, and were apparently exempt from performing such service outside it. As such, the maritime lands were treated as a priority area for defence, as, indeed, were the land frontiers of the March with Scotland. In both areas the concept of retention of the populace for defence held good. In the north this was certainly the case within the land lying immediately adjacent to the border, and was frequently extended to the whole of the four northernmost shires and the liberty of Durham. Thus in 1342, writs stating that all men who wished to serve the king on his forthcoming campaign should prepare themselves were sent to every English county except the northernmost ones¹. Similarly, the bishop of Durham and the sheriffs of Cumberland, Northumberland, Westmorland, and Yorkshire were ordered to proclaim that no-one was to leave the border region, but that all men were to remain there for the defence of the March². Moreover,

1. Foedera, II, ii. 1195.

2. C.C.R., 1369-74, pp.361-2. Conversely, in 1386 Yorkshire was to send 400 archers to help resist the French (C.P.R., 1385-9, p.217). In that year, however, the Scots did not present a threat, truce with them having been sealed on 27 June. The French threat was much greater, and in any case, the counties situated immediately on the border -- Cumberland and Northumberland -- did not contribute archers.

in both the March area and on the coasts special officials worked in conjunction with the sheriffs and the commissioners of array for safeguarding against hostile attacks. As the wardens of the March had developed in the north by the fourteenth century, so had emerged an official with responsibility for the defence of the coastal regions¹. The keeper of the maritime lands, or custos terre maritime, had evolved by the final decade of the thirteenth century and was to remain pre-eminent in matters of coastal defence until the office was absorbed into enlarged commissions of array during the 1370s².

It has been noted that the maritime zone was not precisely delineated, but had 'a boundary conventionally and traditionally understood'³. While there was a certain imprecision in the definition of the boundaries, it is clear from documentary evidence that even contemporaries did not regard them as fixed. In 1346, the terre maritime were clearly defined as extending six leagues inland from the sea. A writ to the arrayers in Somerset and six other maritime counties sent in April of that year stated that all persons residing within this distance from the sea were to be exempted from performing military service elsewhere⁴. In August, the sheriff of Sussex was instructed that if a certain Stephen Power were to be found 'cum familia et toto posse suo

1. R.R. Reid, 'The Office of the Warden of the Marches: its Origin and early History', E.H.R., xxxii (1917), 479-96.

2. See below, pp.100-10, 121-3.

3. Hewitt, The Organization of War under Edward III, pp.6-7.

4. Foedera, III. i. 81. For the purpose of this study, a league is understood to represent three English miles.

super custodia terre maritime infra sex leucas a mari', he was to be released from a distraint to contribute towards the cost of men-at-arms for the king's overseas expedition¹. Release from a similar distraint upon John Keene and Richard Danvers was ordered in April 1348. Both men, 'quorum terre et tenementes infra sex leucas a mari in comitatu Suthamtonie existerunt', were serving there in compliance with a royal order which ran:

'nuper, cum assensu consilii nostri, ordinaverimus quod homines terras et tenementes infra sex leucas a mari habentes ... existerunt super costeris maritimis in partibus illis pro defensione et salvacione parcium illarum contra hostiles alienigenarum hostium incursus morarentur'².

In a writ of 6 April 1338, however, the commissioners of array in Kent were ordered not to choose men from within twelve leagues of the sea for service elsewhere³. At the same time, the purveyors of victuals and the sheriffs in Kent and the East Anglian shires were ordered not to take any victuals except wine from the area within twelve leagues of the coast, since the enemy's fleet was near at hand⁴. Twelve leagues was adjudged to be the extent of the maritime lands on many other occasions⁵.

1. P.R.O., C. 76/23, m. 16^v.

2. P.R.O., C. 76/26, m. 17^v. Six leagues occurred frequently, as in 1353 (C.C.R., 1349-54, p. 545) and 1371 (C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 229).

3. Foedera, II. ii. 1026. Hewitt, however, states that by 1346 at least, the principle of exempting the men of the maritime lands from military service elsewhere was clearly established, although he confesses ignorance as to whether such principles were operative in 1338-40 (Organization of War under Edward III, p. 7, n. 1).

4. Foedera, II. ii. 1025.

5. E.g., in 1347 (P.R.O., C.76/25, m. 24^v).

Six or twelve leagues appear to have been the most common limits employed. Conceivably, the boundary of the maritime lands fluctuated in distance from the sea according to the prevailing general conditions. Factors such as the degree of external danger from enemies or the demands of recruitment of troops for overseas campaigns may well have had an influence on the extent of the maritime lands. This would explain the twelve league limit during the troubled year of 1338 and the six league limit of 1346, when the king's expedition had involved recruitment on a large scale. For English kings it was thus often vital to maintain a balance between attack and defence for the well-being of the realm.

Although six and twelve leagues appear to have been the most common limits employed, there may well, at times, have been other distances involved. For example, the writ of November 1338 regarding the ringing of church bells to warn of the approach of enemies, applied to churches situated within seven leagues of the sea¹. In 1346, the sheriff of Sussex was ordered to relax a distraint which had been placed upon the men of Lewes for non-provision of troops for the king's French expedition, since the town was 'que nisi per quatuor leucas distat a mare circa salva custodia terre maritime'². Whether in this instance four leagues was intended to be taken as the extent of the maritime lands is uncertain. Arguably, the distance may have been interpreted as lying within the greater, more customary distances of six or twelve leagues.

1. Foedera, II. ii. 1066.

2. P.R.O., C. 76/23, m. 16^v. In the same year, the men of the coastal town of Holderness in Yorkshire were ordered to remain there to counter enemy attacks, and were not to be compelled to perform service elsewhere (C. 76/22, m. 30).

Whatever the extent of the maritime lands, one thing is certain: men (and occasionally victuals) were not normally removed in times of danger from the coastal zones of maritime shires. But whereas this rule held good for the area defined as terre maritime, it did not necessarily apply to the whole of a coastal shire. Men living in the inland parts of a coastal shire, but outside the belt of maritime lands, were indeed liable for military service outside the shire. Whereas in June 1347, for instance, the fencible men of the Kentish maritime lands were declared exempt from performing military service outside the coastal region, in August the Kentish arrayers raised a force of archers from the non-maritime parts of the county for service at Calais¹. Other examples of this practice abound throughout the century, and reflect a parallel with the practice of the northern border shires, where distinction was made between the march, or part of the county adjoining the national frontier and under the control of the wardens, and the remainder of the shire². The restrictions on the removal of fencible men from the maritime lands also often applied to victuals and other supplies, but such restrictions were usually only implemented in times when enemy attacks were threatened. Thus the Isle of Wight, which because of its strategically important location was probably regarded wholly as terre maritime was frequently the object of writs which prohibited the export of victuals³.

1. Foedera, III. i. 130.

2. Reid, 'The Office of the Warden of the Marches', p.485, citing Rot. Scot., i. 140-1.

3. E.g., P.R.O., C. 76/15, m. 7^v; C. 76/24, mm. 8, 31^v; C. 76/30, m. 12^v.

The dangers resulting from the removal of men from the coastal belt were patent, and exemption of the coastal inhabitants from service elsewhere was an attempt to ensure that this vulnerable region did not become denuded of defenders. On occasions when the principle did not operate, there was frequently cause for alarm. Thus the reduction of defensible manpower in North Wales in 1345 through the frequent arraying of troops there for overseas service so alarmed Roger Trumwyn, the lieutenant of the king's Justice there, that he was driven to complain to the Black Prince that if such demands for troops were not reduced, there would be insufficient men left to defend the coasts in the event of an enemy attack¹. In 1384, Richard II was compelled to issue a writ of supersedeas in favour of the burgesses of Hull in case of any indictment before the justices of Oyer and Terminer, since the absence of any men from the town would reduce its defensibility². The need to keep sufficient men in the coastal regions to counter enemy attacks was made more difficult by the fact that a natural consequence of the attacks was the migration of the populaces of the coastal regions to areas further inland, where they could escape from the attendant dangers of raids and the burdens of defence. Consequently, the crown was compelled to resort to the issue of writs prohibiting withdrawal from the maritime lands whenever danger threatened. Such orders were supported by the seizure of the property of all who refused to comply³.

1. P.R.O., S.C. 1/54/102.

2. C.P.R., 1381-5, p.363.

3. The occasions on which this happened are numerous, e.g. C.C.R., 1339-41, pp.101, 444.

Because of the constant danger of enemy attacks in times of war upon coastal places, the designation of the coastal zone as a special defensive area was essential. Whereas the populations of inland shires were no less liable for defensive service than their compatriots in the maritime shires, it was on the inhabitants of the coastal shires, and particularly on those living within the maritime lands, that the heaviest defensive burdens fell. Whenever an enemy fleet threatened the realm, it was the coastal regions which experienced the brunt of the measures taken for national security. The succeeding chapters will mainly deal with the defensive system within the coastal shires.

CHAPTER FIVE

DEFENSIVE OFFICIALS: ROYAL COMMISSIONERS

In times of threatened danger from abroad, the crown relied upon certain appointed officials to mobilize the local levies and to take charge of the defence of local areas. Within the coastal shires a bilateral system of defensive officials was employed during the phase of war up to the treaty of Brétigny, and for the first few years of the 1370s. Whenever the realm was threatened, the crown appointed officials known as the keepers of the maritime lands, or custodes terre maritime, who took charge of the defence of the coastal shires, and who worked in conjunction with the royal commissioners appointed to array the fencible men in the shires and with the sheriffs. The keepers of the maritime lands had wide powers in matters of defence and in the control of the local levies. They were superior in rank to the arrayers, and could even command the intendment of arrayers who were appointed for inland counties. Broadly speaking, during the first phase of the war, the keepers of the maritime lands acted as local commanders charged with the over all direction of defence in the coastal shires, while the commissioners of array were responsible for the actual levying and organizing of the fencible men of the counties. During the 1340s and 1350s there was some overlapping of functions between the keepers and the arrayers, but by 1370, little significant change had taken place.

in the defensive system and it was basically the same as it had been in 1337.

The defensive arrangements of 1337 had not resulted from the outbreak of war with France and its accompanying threat to the realm. The system of defence had evolved gradually over the preceding two centuries. The development of a defensive system had also seen the growth of the offices of defensive officials. It is difficult to trace with any certainty the development of the concept that the coastal region was a special area meriting the appointment of officials with a particular responsibility for its defence. Originally, it had been the sheriff who had been responsible for the military organization within the coastal shire. With his increasing burden of administrative duties from the twelfth century onwards, however, some of his military powers were delegated to other officials. As early as 1193, a nebulous official called the keeper of the shores had made an appearance. Beyond his powers of preventing the entry of undesirables into the realm, little is known of this keeper¹.

It is no coincidence that with the loss of Angevin lands in France in the early thirteenth century, there should have been an increase in the number of references to coastal defence in England. In 1205, the year after the loss of Normandy, some of the sheriff's military powers in regard to the posse comitatus were delegated to a new official. By the defensive arrangements of that year, a chief constable of the shire

1. 'Chronicle of Richard of Devizes', Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I, ed. R. Howlett (4 vols., R.S., London, 1885-9), iii. 411. Cited in Powicke, Military Obligation in Medieval England, p.121. The account of the development of the defensive officials to the end of the thirteenth century which follows owes much to Professor Powicke's conclusions.

was appointed by the crown to serve as overseer and commander of the local levies which were to be arrayed by the lesser constables of boroughs and cities and of hundreds and vills¹. Not only were the lesser constables to be intendant to the chief constables, but the 'communa totius comitatus' was also to be intendant. The parallels between this two-tier system of defensive officials and that of the early fourteenth century are very apparent. Indeed, the chief constables and the lesser constables have been seen as the fore-runners of the later keepers of the maritime lands and the commissioners of array respectively².

The events of the thirteenth century led to a great deal of concern for coastal defence, and, in consequence, to the development of defensive officials. In the defensive arrangements of 1213, the sheriff played a prominent role³, but by the second and third decades of the century, wardens of the sea coasts were appointed with regularity. In 1217, the inhabitants of the marina of Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex were ordered to be intendant to 'ballivo nostro de marina', who had the custody of the coasts in those counties⁴. In 1224, the barons of the Cinque Ports were to be intendant to Geoffrey de Lucy, 'maritinam nostram ... custodiendam', and another warden of the coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk was also named⁵. The duties of these wardens are unknown,

1. Gervase of Canterbury: Historical Works; the Chronicle of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I by Gervase, the Monk of Canterbury, ed. W. Stubbs (2 vols., R.S., London, 1879-80), ii. 96-7.

2. Powicke, Military Obligation, p.121.

3. Roger de Wendover, Chronica sive Flores Historiarum, ed. H. O. Coxe (5 vols., Eng. Hist. Soc., London, 1841-4), iii. 244-6.

4. P.R., 1216-25, p.121.

5. Ibid., pp.465, 469, 492.

although it has been suggested that they had some control over the local levies¹.

There seems to have been no real continuity in the development of special officials charged with the defence of the coastal regions during the thirteenth century. Apart from instances in 1268, the sheriff appears to have continued to play a dominant role. In 1227, the men of Norfolk and Suffolk were to be intendant to their sheriff in matters of defence; in 1264, the sheriffs were ordered to prevent persons from leaving the costerum maris, to arrest all who had not gone to the partes maritime for defence, and to choose men from each vill in relation to its population to serve in defence².

By the final decade of the thirteenth century, however, an organized system had developed incorporating keepers of the maritime lands as commanders in the coastal shires, with the arrayers serving under them as organizers of the local levies. The defensive crisis of 1295 provides the most copious evidence of this elaborate system of defence in operation³. The measures taken for coastal defence in 1295 were to remain, in essence, the basis of defensive organization within the maritime shires throughout the fourteenth century.

1. Powicke, Military Obligation, p.84, n.6 claims that they may also have had control over local shipping, and were thus the forerunners of the commissioners of array and of naval commanders.

2. B.L., Cotton MS. Julius C. iv, fo. 129 (1227); C.R., 1261-4, pp.405-6 (1264).

3. E.g., Parl. Writs, II.ii. 268-72. Custodes were also appointed to take charge of certain coastal towns. For a very detailed account of the defensive organization of 1295, see A. Z. Freeman, 'A Most Defensive: the Coast Defense Scheme of 1295', Speculum, xlii (1967), 446-62.

During the period of the Hundred Years' War up to the Peace of Brétigny, the keepers of the maritime lands were usually the principal officials concerned with defence within the coastal shires. On rare occasions when the crown chose to experiment, extraordinary defensive officials made a brief appearance. In July 1338, for example, overseers of commissioners of array were appointed with control of large groups, each comprising several counties, and in 1359-60, commissions of array with enlarged powers were issued to the exclusion of the keepers of the maritime lands¹. These, however, appear to have been experimental measures of no immediate permanence, and the usual practice in times of danger was for the crown to issue simultaneously writs de custodienda terre maritime, appointing keepers of the maritime lands, and commissions of array.

The duties of the keepers from the late 1330s onwards are clearly seen from their royal letters of commission. Usually they were appointed with the following powers:

'ad custodienda et custodiri facienda omnes portus et litora maris in quibus naves applicant vel applicare poterunt, et omnem terram marinam in comitatibus Suthantonie, Berks' et Wilts', tam infra libertates quam extra, et ad resistendum omnibus qui contra nos per terram vel per marem armata potencia venissent, vel regnum nostrum invadere voluerint in locis supradictis, et ad eos cuiuscumque status vel condicionis fuerint expugnandum et destruendum, et ad omnia alia et singula facienda et ordinanda que ad salvam et securam custodiam parcium earundem tam per terram quam marem contra huiusmodi pericula poterunt'²

1. C.P.R., 1338-40, pp.134, 139; C.P.R., 1358-61, pp.324, 416.

2. P.R.O., C.61/50, m.7. The conditions of this appointment are similar to the 'typical statement' of the keepers' duties in 1340 postulated by Hewitt, The Organization of War under Edward III, p 7.

The commissions frequently carried a clause de intendendo, binding upon all persons living within the area under the keepers' jurisdiction, and prescribing the severest penalties for persons who did not comply with the keepers' demands. Intendance was particularly enjoined upon the commissioners of array within the keepers' area of jurisdiction and upon the sheriffs of the counties¹.

Minor details were often added to or removed from the terms of the commissions de custodienda terre maritime from time to time. A commission of April 1339, for instance, added the supervision of towns, villages, and 'alia loca maritima', and entrusted the keepers with the responsibility for their safeguard, for fortifying them or repairing existing defences, and for keeping Chancery appraised of any works undertaken in this respect². While such powers were not a recurring feature of the keepers' commissions, it is probable that they reflected existing duties which were already carried out de facto by the keepers in the course of their work.

More frequently included was a clause empowering the keepers to make arrays. Thus, in 1338, John de Grandison, bishop of Exeter, and Hugh de Courteney were appointed to guard the coast of Devon and to array the men of the county for its defence³. In the preceding year,

1. E.g., P.R.O., C. 61/50, m.7; C. 76/22, m.24; C. 76/30, mm. 4, 5.

2. P.R.O., C. 76/14, m. 9.

3. C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 184. Dr. Hewitt claims that arraying was only added to the keepers' duties by 1346. He seems to have overlooked this instance, although there is some possibility that the commissions of 20 November 1338 were extraordinary appointments. Hugh Courteney, earl of Devon had served, however, as a keeper of the maritime lands in Devon in 1337 (P.R.O., C.61/49, m.26). But whether or not the officials appointed in November 1338 were actually keepers of the maritime lands is irrelevant: the above reference shows that the principle of combining arraying with guarding the coast was known in 1338.

keepers of the maritime lands in the palatinates of Chester and Durham had been appointed 'tam ad custodienda et custodiri facienda omnes portus et litora maris in quibus naves applicant vel applicare poterunt, et omnem terram maritimam ... quam assiduendos ad arma et arraiandos omnes homines de eisdem comitatibus defensabiles et valides'¹.

Commissions of 1344, 1346 and later gave similar powers to the keepers of the maritime lands in all English coastal counties².

Conversely, on several occasions before 1360, the commissioners of array received powers usually given to the keepers of the maritime lands. In March 1360, for example, the arrayers of inland counties were ordered to array the men of their shires and 'to be ready to march toward the several parts of Hants or elsewhere ... upon the king's warning or that of the Hampshire arrayers'³. The following month saw the arrayers with powers to compel local landholders to find 'men to abide on the sea shore during the present perils'⁴. Such functions, particularly that of compelling men to remain in defence of the coast, were usually the prerogative of the keepers of the maritime lands. Gradually, towards the close of the 1360s, however, there were occasional blurrings of the terms of the separate commissions into one another, which heralded the changes which were to take place in the 1370s.

Occasionally, the keepers of the maritime lands were given powers

1. P.R.O., C. 76/49, m. 24.

2. E.g., B.L., Cotton MS. Julius C. iv, fo. 129^v; P.R.O., C. 76/22, m. 30; C. 76/23, mm. 15^v, 20, 24; C. 76/54, m. 8; C.P.R., 1358-61, p. 416.

3. C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 97-8. The italics are mine.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

to arrest workmen and supplies, if needed for defence, and were frequently empowered to arrest and imprison all who disobeyed them¹. Less frequently, such powers of arrest were extended to shipping. This had been the case in 1324, and it reappeared variously in commissions of 1336, 1346, 1348, 1350, and 1358².

Akin to the arrest of men and materials were the powers to distrain men to perform military service within the maritime lands in respect of lands which they held there. The commissions frequently specified these powers of distraint upon the goods, lands and persons of contrariants. The use of distraint was widespread. Numerous petitions to the crown against distraint placed by the keepers on their property in a particular shire were made by persons who were performing their customary military service to the full in other shires³. This was a major problem for persons who held lands in more than one shire, and the keepers themselves, in their private capacity as landowners, ran similar risks. Such a distraint placed upon the lands of the keepers of the maritime lands in Lincolnshire by their fellow keepers in other counties in 1346 prompted a royal statement that all keepers of the maritime lands were to be exempt from the demands of service elsewhere⁴.

1. E.g., P.R.O., C. 61/49, m. 26; C. 61/50, mm. 7-11; C. 76/22, mm. 25, 30, etc.

2. Parl. Writs, II.ii. 660 (1324); P.R.O., E. 101/19/13, E. 101/612/34 (1336); C. 76/22, mm. 25, 30 (1346); C. 76/26, m. 10 (1348); C. 76/28, m. 6 (1350); C. 76/33, m. 5 (1358). This power to arrest ships for defence was a vestige of the powers held by the thirteenth-century wardens of the sea-coast (F.W. Brooks, The English Naval Forces, 1199-1272 (London, 1933), pp.168 ff.). See also p. 99, n. 1 above.

3. E.g., P.R.O., C. 76/25, m. 21^v; C. 76/28, m. 13^v; C. 81/1760/13, 18, 75, 79-82.

4. P.R.O., C. 76/23, m. 14^v. This ruling applied to all others serving in person in defence of the coast 'cum familia et toto posse'.

Another duty which the keepers frequently had bestowed upon them was the responsibility for beacons. The keepers had been involved with beacons from at least the reign of Edward II. The inquisition into the beacons of the Isle of Wight in 1324 had been held before the keepers of the maritime lands there, and commissions issued to the keepers of the maritime lands during the same year included responsibility for erecting beacons¹. Although in 1325 and 1326 the care of the beacons was entrusted to other officials, commissions of 1337, 1346, 1352, 1356, 1373 again gave this responsibility to the keepers of the maritime lands². But although a frequent inclusion, the responsibility for the beacons was by no means a permanent feature of the commissions de custodienda terre maritime.

Once appointed, the keepers of the maritime lands were responsible to the king and council. Often, they were instructed to report their actions or findings to Chancery³. It is probable that the keepers swore an oath to uphold the tenor of their office, as did the keepers of the peace, arrayers, and other royal commissioners. There is evidence that they did so in the 1320s. In 1324, the bishops took the oaths of keepers appointed to the maritime lands of counties within their respective dioceses⁴. The link between the crown and the keepers was a strong one.

1. C.I.M., 1307-49, p.209, no.839; Parl. Writs, II.ii. 661.

2. C.C.R., 1337-9, p.137; Foedera, II.ii.996 (1337); P.R.O., C.76/23, m. 20, C. 81/1758/3 (1346); Foedera, III.i. 239; C. 76/30, mm. 4, 5 (1352); C. 76/34, m. 9 (1356); B.L., Cotton MS. Julius C. iv, fo.129^v (1373).

3. P.R.O., C. 76/14, m.9.

4. Parl. Writs, II.ii. 664.

Frequently, in times of grave danger, the commissions appointing the keepers exhorted them to do their utmost 'with all speed, diligence, and solicitude' to ensure the safety of the areas under their charge, and, furthermore, threatened the direst penalties should mishaps occur through any negligence on the part of the keepers¹. Should a keeper default in his duty, the crown took immediate and stringent measures to rectify the deficiency. Thus in 1346, Olivier de Bohun, one of the keepers of the maritime lands in Hampshire, who had withdrawn from the county, thereby standing in contempt of his appointment, was threatened with the forfeiture of all his lands unless he returned there immediately. Graver penalties were hinted at should any damages have arisen as a result of his defection². Prompt action by the crown in such cases is understandable. The severe depredations wrought by the enemy in Hampshire in 1338 were ascribed chiefly to the negligence of the keepers of the maritime lands in that county, who, 'knowing that the attack was to be made, not only neglected to provide for the defence of the parts threatened, but basely fled with the men of the said town [Southampton] on sight of the enemy and ... permitted the men appointed to stay and guard the coast at the charges of the said county ... for money and gifts received for this purpose by the said keepers ... to go home'. An inquiry was ordered and the guilty were to be imprisoned in the Tower of London³.

1. E.g., P.R.O., C. 76/23, mm. 15^v, 19^v.

2. P.R.O., C. 76/23, m. 21^v; C. 81/1757/90. Olivier is described in this second document as 'chief arreieur sour la garde de la meer'.

3. C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 180.

The keepers of the maritime lands thus possessed extensive powers for acting in the defence of the realm. During the period of their greatest prominence prior to the 1370s, they were the principal defensive officials in coastal areas, commanding the obedience of sheriffs, prelates, magnates, arrayers, and jurati ad arma alike. As well as having direct charge of the terre maritime, their powers extended to the whole of the maritime shire, and even beyond¹. By the 1330s, a clear principle was in operation that persons living in inland shires were bound by their obligation to render military service for defence, if needs be, within the maritime lands of neighbouring coastal shires. For this purpose, shires were grouped together, two or three inland ones sending their levies to serve in the maritime lands of a specified coastal shire. These groupings were fairly rigid -- Surrey men usually served in the maritime lands of Sussex; Wiltshire and Berkshire men in Hampshire, and so forth -- but the groupings did change from time to time. In March 1338, for example, keepers were appointed 'ad custodienda et custodiri facienda omnes portus et litora maris in quibus naves applicant vel applicare poterunt et omnem terram maritimam in comitatibus Suthantonie, Berks' et Wilts'², and similar commissions were issued for groupings of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Worcestershire; Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, and Rutland; Lancashire,

1. Cf. Hewitt, (The Organization of War under Edward III, p. 8), who disagrees with this: 'The keepers ... can enforce the obligation to serve and have all the powers necessary for the performance of their duties. But the powers and duties are restricted to their own counties'.

2. P.R.O., C. 61/50, m. 7.

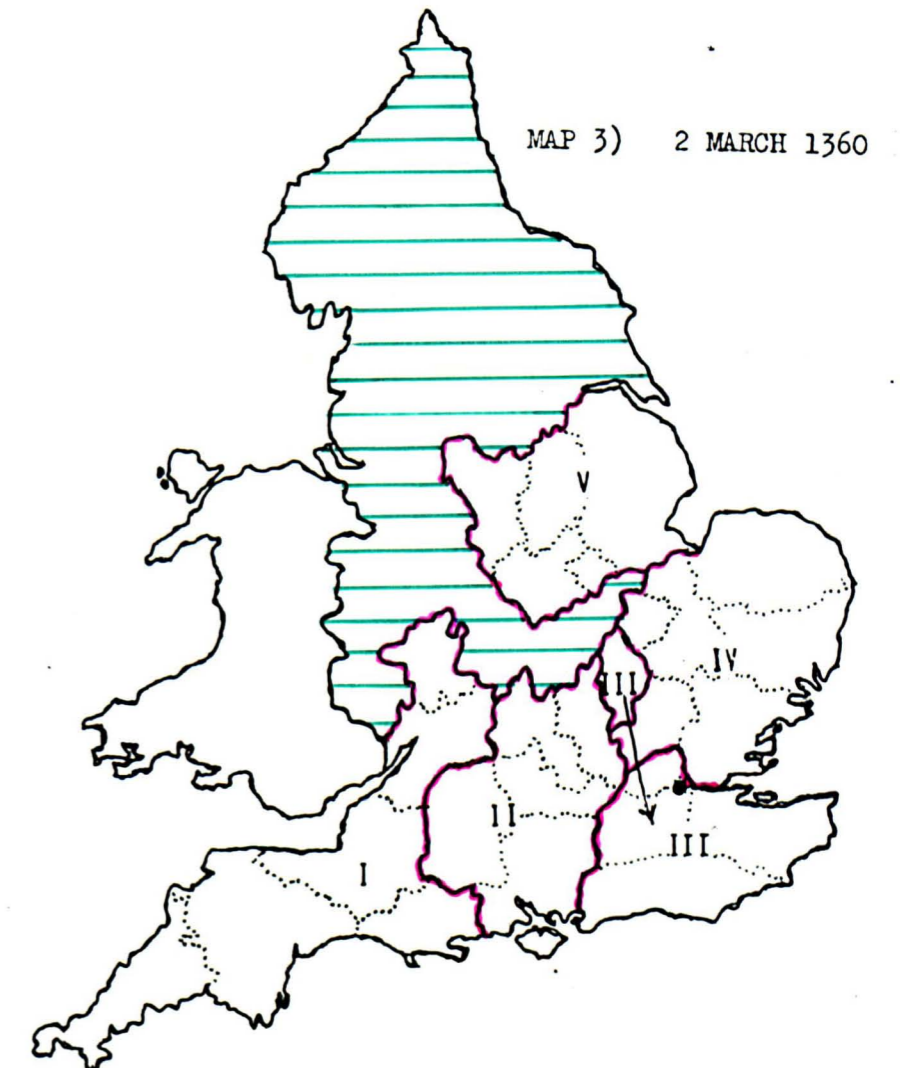
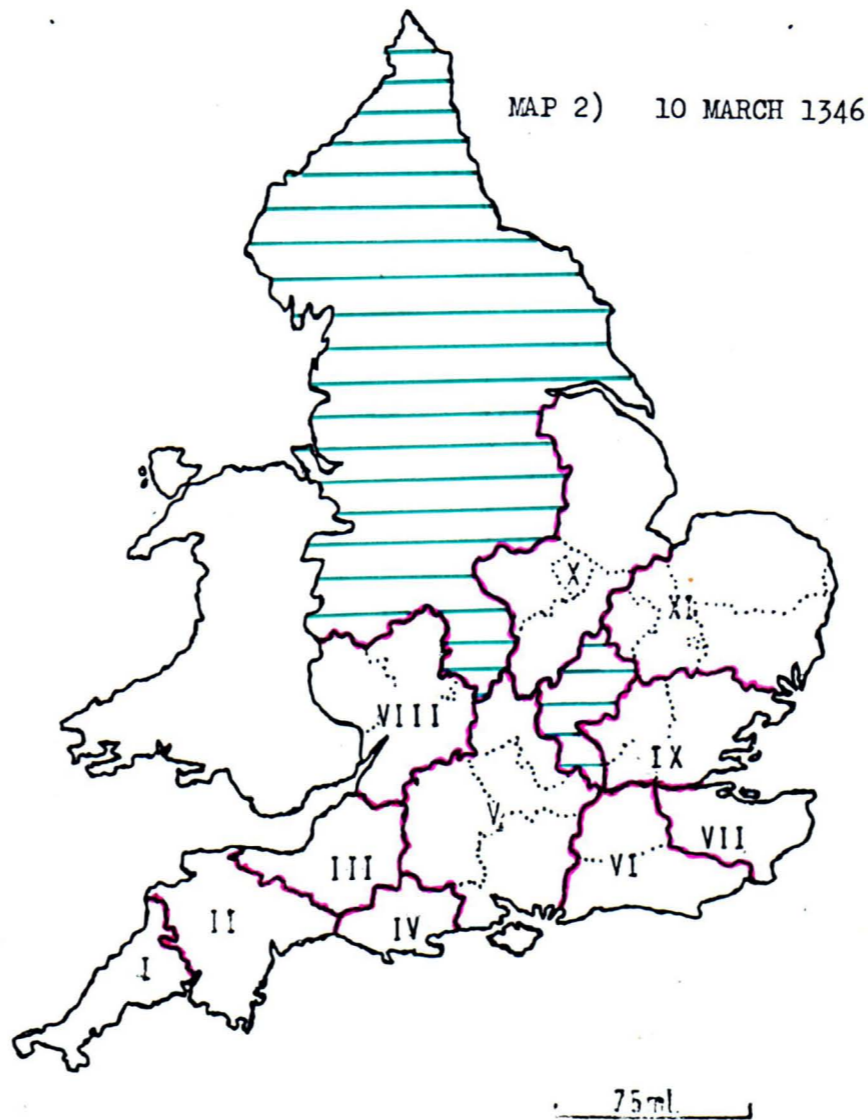
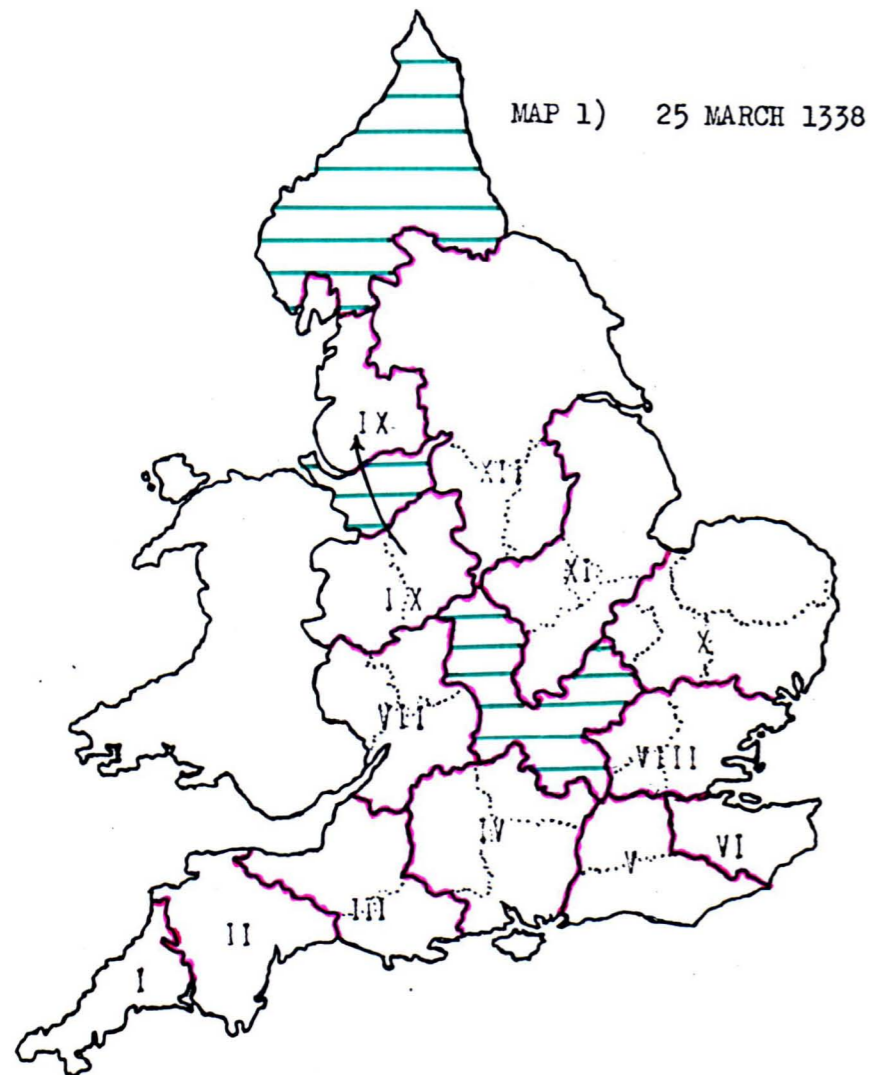
Shropshire, and Staffordshire; and so forth¹. A similar scheme of county groupings had occurred in the previous June². By March 1346, the groupings had changed slightly, and there were further changes in March 1360³. By and large, however, any such changes were slight, and it was only on very rare occasions that groupings out of the ordinary were made. In May 1351, for example, the coastal shires of Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset, and Wiltshire formed a single group, but this appears to have been an extraordinary measure⁴.

By this means of gathering together counties into such groups, the crown ensured that sufficient numbers of defenders were available for the protection of the coastal belt. It also meant that the keepers appointed to the maritime lands of the coastal shire of the county groupings had some control over the arrayers of the inland shires of the grouping.

Similar groupings were found in Wales and the palatinates. In Wales, keepers of the maritime lands were appointed for the large single units of North Wales and South Wales. In 1335, the arrayers in South Wales were directed to send men to the maritime lands there, and in the following year, similar instructions were sent to arrayers in

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1. See map 1.
 2. P.R.O., C. 61/49, m. 26.
 3. P.R.O., C. 76/22, mm. 24, 25, 30 (1346); P.R.O., C. 54/198, m. 39^v, C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 97-8 (1360). See also maps 2 and 3.
 4. P.R.O., C. 76/29, m. 9.

INLAND SHIRES LINKED WITH MARITIME SHIRES FOR COASTAL DEFENCE
 SHOWING FLUCTUATIONS OF THE SHIRE GROUPINGS



K E Y

- Boundary of Shire
- Boundary of Group of Shires
- ▨ Shires not indicated

Maritime shires to which men from the inland shires of the group are sent are capitalized

- I. CORNWALL
- II. DEVON
- III. DORSET, SOMERSET
- IV. HANTS, Berks, Wilts
- V. SUSSEX, Surrey
- VI. KENT
- VII. GLOS, Heref, Worcs
- VIII. ESSEX, Herts, Midd
- IX. LANCS, Salop, Staffs
- X. NORF, SUFF, Cambs, Hunts
- XI. LINC, Leics, Northants, Rut
- XII. YORKS, Derby, Notts

- I. CORNWALL
- II. DEVON
- III. SOMERSET
- IV. DORSET
- V. HANTS, Berks, Oxon, Wilts
- VI. SUSSEX, Surrey
- VII. KENT
- VIII. GLOS, Heref, Worcs
- IX. ESSEX, Herts, Midd
- X. LINC, Leics, Northants, Rut
- XI. NORF, SUFF, Cambs, Hunts

- I. CORNWALL, DEVON, DORSET, SOMERSET, Glos, Worcs
- II. HANTS, Berks, Bucks, Oxon, Wilts
- III. KENT, SUSSEX, Beds, Midd, Surrey, City of London
- IV. ESSEX, NORF, SUFF, Cambs, Herts, Hunts
- V. LINC, Derby, Leics, Notts, Rut

both North and South Wales¹. The palatinates of Chester, Durham and Lancaster were not organized into groups with other shires, but usually remained separate. None the less, keepers of the maritime lands were appointed in each, but usually by the lord. Frequently, whenever the king appointed keepers of the maritime lands and arrayers in the English counties, he also sent writs to the earl of Chester, the bishop of Durham, and the duke of Lancaster ordering them to appoint their own defensive officials within their liberties².

Occasionally, keepers of the maritime lands were appointed for smaller areas within the county. This was the usual practice in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, where there were administrative subdivisions. Thus keepers (and arrayers) were appointed separately for each of the three

1. P.R.O., E. 101/612/34 (1335); C. 61/49, m. 24, E. 101/19/13 (1336). The keeper of the maritime lands in South Wales in 1335, Owen de Montgomeri, had sub-keepers serving under him, each responsible for the security of a length of coastline. Each served at the standard military rate of pay for his rank, for which the keeper accounted at the Exchequer. The sub-guardians were arranged as follows:

<u>Sub-keeper</u>	<u>Defensive Zone</u>
Robert de Penres, knight	- Kidwelly, Carnwyllion, and Gower
John de Laundri	- Carmarthen and the waters of the river Tywi
Yevan ap Maddok Vaghan	- County of Cardigan and the river Teifi
William Huald	- Pembrokeshire and the port of Milford

See Appendix 1.
2. P.R.O., C. 61/49, m. 24; C. 76/30, m. 5; Parl. Writs, II.ii. 661. It is well known that the royal system of administration was, to a large extent, duplicated within the great franchises. See N. Denholm-Young, Seignorial Administration in England (Oxford, 1937), p.2 and passim.

Yorkshire ridings and for the parts of Holland, Kesteven, and Lindsey¹. Less frequently keepers were appointed for smaller areas. In 1338, for example, the abbot of Ramsey was appointed keeper of the maritime lands in the marshes of Ramsey², while in 1346, keepers were appointed in the parts of Holderness in Yorkshire and in the Sussex rapes³. Keepers were also appointed for the strategically important and vulnerable areas of the Isles of Sheppey and Thanet and for the Isle of Wight⁴.

As the duties of the keepers of the maritime lands underwent slight modifications in the period 1337 to 1370, so the numbers of keepers named in the commissions of appointment varied slightly from time to time. Two to four keepers per maritime shire was the usual size of the commissions de custodienda terre maritime. The commissions of March 1338, for example, generally tally with these figures⁵. By March 1346, the numbers had risen to between four and twelve keepers per commission, and the sheriff of each maritime shire was also named as a keeper, although such a practice was not to become a permanent feature of these commissions⁶. By 1371 and 1373, the numbers of keepers named in each

1. P.R.O., C. 76/22, m. 24; C. 76/23, m. 24^v; C.P.R., 1324-7, pp. 216-17.

2. C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 69. This was an extraordinary appointment made because the keepers in Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire 'cannot conveniently get at the aforesaid marshes and places'.

3. P.R.O., C. 76/23, m. 30 (Holderness). These were appointed 'considerantes dampna et pericula in partibus de Holdernessee ex huiusmodi hostilibus alienigenarum aggressibus'. C. 76/23, mm. 19^v, 20, 22; C. 81/1758/3 (Sussex). Keepers were appointed for each of the rapes of Arundel, Bremeber, Chichester, Hastings, Lewes, and Pevensy.

4. P.R.O., C. 76/23, mm. 19^v, 24^v. The Isle of Wight, because of its particularly vulnerable position, merited special treatment. See pp. 184, 213 below.

5. P.R.O., C. 61/50, m. 7. See table 3.

6. P.R.O., C. 76/22, mm. 24, 25. See table 4.

commission had again reverted to an average of two or three per maritime county¹.

The keepers of the maritime lands were usually magnates or other notables with substantial holdings of land within the shires in which they operated as keepers. The New Ordinances of 1311 had decreed that wardens of the coasts and keepers of castles on the sea coast were to be local men 'de la terre mesmes'². Although the Ordinances had been repealed, it is clear that this idea embodied in them held good throughout the fourteenth century. The appointment of local men as keepers was, moreover, an extension of the principle that men should be enjoined to go to their estates near the coast whenever danger threatened. Thus the Courteney earls of Devon were frequently commissioned as keepers of the maritime lands in that shire, as were the earls of Huntingdon in Essex, where they held estates, and the Cobhams in Kent.

The Commissioners of Array, 1337-70

Between the 1290s and the early 1370s, the commissioners of array for defence played an important subordinate role to the keepers of the maritime lands in the defence of the coastal regions. It was the arrayers who did the actual work of mobilizing the jurati ad arma who were to be sent to serve on the coast under the keepers of the maritime lands. Before progressing with the actual functions of the arrayers, it

1. P.R.O., C. 76/54, m. 8; B.L., Cotton MS. Julius C. iv, fo. 129^v.

2. Stats. Realm, i. 160.

is first necessary to define what is meant in this study by commissions of array.

During the fourteenth century, commissions of array were used by the crown for two main purposes: to raise the local levies in the English counties for the defence of the realm, and to provide troops for overseas service in foreign campaigns. Both forms of the commission of array shared the same fons et origo in the obligation of the populace to serve in the defence of the realm, an obligation tempered by the Statute of Winchester and by its revisions of the fourteenth century. This, and other similarities, between the commissions has caused historians to make no differentiation between them.

Stubbs was of the opinion that if the force assembled by the commissioners of array were properly in accordance with the Statute of Winchester, then in theory, all the fencibles off the shire would be liable to perform military service, and this would have detrimental side effects in the fields of strategy and economics. Thus, he deduced, a universal levy could never be called out in practice¹. In this hypothesis has been seen the reason for the development of the principle of selection in the arrays, a practice which became increasingly common during the fourteenth century.

It is quite clear from documentary evidence, however, that selective arrays did not supersede general arrays. Both sorts continued to flourish during the fourteenth century, often side by side. It was only when arrayers were ordered to raise troops for overseas service (or occasionally for the Scottish wars) that signs of selectivity

1. Stubbs, Constitutional History, ii. 283.

generally occurred. Arrays of the entire posse were ordered whenever the English counties needed to be defended from threatened enemy attack. Such differences were self-explanatory. The principle of selection was well suited to providing the type of soldier needed for overseas service; the fighting force raised through local levies was, from its very nature, hopelessly unsuited to offensive warfare, as indeed, it had proved itself to be in the reigns of the first two Edwards. Local levies, in their training, discipline, and armaments, would be no match for well-armed professionals¹. Also, as Stubbs pointed out, the removal of the whole able-bodied populace of a shire for service elsewhere was a ridiculously impracticable proposition. On the other hand, the jurati was ideally suited to the role of local defence: indeed, their original and principal raison d'être had been to serve in defence of their homeland. If not the most efficient force which could be used for home defence, at least they were better suited to a defensive role within their own shires than to an offensive role in far-off places.

It was, indeed, the shortcomings of the local levies which contributed to the adoption of the principle of the selection of the best men of the shire for service outside their home county, while the levée en masse or 'militia' was at the same time retained for defensive purposes. It is just this differentiation which distinguished between the two forms of array, and the most noticeable difference is seen in

1. This has been clearly revealed by archaeological evidence from the excavation of grave-pits on the site of the battlefield of Visby, where the ill-armed local levies were defeated by the better armed Danish army (B. Thordemann, Armour from the Battle of Visby, 1361 (2 vols., Stockholm, 1939-40), 1.22-5, 225-9).

the wording of the separate commissions. Those issued to raise troops for service overseas usually specified the numbers and types of troops required, often stressing that the men raised were to be of the best and most powerful in the country -- 'les meilleurs et plus suffisauntz', 'meliores, fortiores et aptiores'. In the case of levies raised specifically for local defence, no such nicety was usually observed. Instead, the arrayers were ordered to array all the fencible men of the shire between the ages of sixteen and sixty for the defence of the realm.

This difference is illustrated by examples of these two forms of array issued during the year 1337. The first ordered the array of men to serve with the king overseas and ran thus:

'Rex dilectis et fidelibus suis Roberto de Haghm, Edmundo de Durresme, Johanni de Haveryng, et Johanni Grifford, salutem. Cum assignaverimus vos, conjunctim et divisim, ad elegandos in comitatu Essex', exceptis villis de Waltham, Colcestre, et Chelmesford, viginti homines pedites et centum et sexaginta sagittarios de validioribus et potencioribus comitatus illius, tam infra libertates quam extra ...'¹

Here it may be seen how the numbers, types and quality of troops required are carefully set out. Further instructions to the arrayers might include clothing and arming the men, provision of mounts (on rare occasions only), paying the men, and then either sending them with a leader to a specified muster point, or holding them in readiness until the king sent further instructions².

On the other hand, there is a clear contrast between the instructions embodied in the commission above and those in a commission issued for the defence of the West Riding of Yorkshire in 1337:

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1. P.R.O., C. 61/49, m. 29^v. The italics are mine.
 2. Hewitt, Organization of War under Edward III, p.37.

'Rex dilectis et fidelibus suis Johanni de Eland, Nichola^o de Worteley, Willelmo Soryail, et Ranulpho filio Radulphi, salutem. Cum assignaverimus vos ad arraiandos omnes homines defensabiles, tam milites quam armigeros, quam alios de Westrithingo in comitatu, Eborac', tam infra libertates quam extra ... iuxta statum ...'

The basic differences in the forms of commission are plainly seen. When troops were raised for foreign service, the king could afford to be discriminating. But when the threat of enemy attack presented an immediate danger to the realm, the principle of selection was not employed and the full posse comitatus was raised. Whether this posse ever comprised each and every fencible within the shire is doubtful, as Stubbs and others have pointed out. Whatever the case, the second king of general array involved substantially more of the county's population than did the selective arrays for service elsewhere.

The arrays made for home defence did not, moreover, require the stringent enumeration of the men arrayed as a basis for payment as was the case in selective arrays. This was an important factor, reflecting the statutory limitations of 1327 on the service of the jurati overseas. The need for close supervision by the central government was thus not so great as in the case of selective arrays, when payment at the crown's expense was usually involved once the contingents arrayed had left their native shire².

1. P.R.O., C. 61/49, m. 26. The italics are mine.

2. From 1344, at least, the situation concerning the payment of the local levies was clear. The government's reply to the commons' petition regarding service outside the shire stated that if the troops elected in the shire remained there, they were to serve at the expense of the county, but as soon as they left their home shire, they were to serve at the king's wages (Rot.Parl., ii. 149). Thus, while service on the Scottish March, for instance, was theoretically defensive, from the point of view of payment of troops elected in southern counties, it was offensive and selective arrays were made. All troops arrayed by commissions of array were, in theory, regarded as defensive; hence the constant repetition of the cliché 'for the defence of the realm', which frequently appeared in both types of commission.

On rare occasions, troops raised initially for overseas service could be diverted to the role of defensive troops if circumstances warranted it. Thus in August 1356, 120 archers previously elected and arrayed in Kent for the king's expedition, were speedily diverted to the maritime lands of the county when a French attack was rumoured¹. Such instances were exceptional, and generally the clear distinction between general and selective arrays held good. This chapter concentrates on general arrays for defence unless otherwise stated.

The office of the commissioner of array has been fully dealt with elsewhere, notably by Prince and Powicke². During the course of the fourteenth century the commissions of array issued for the defence of the realm underwent numerous small changes as the crown sought to tailor its defensive measures to meet increased enemy attacks. In its simplest form, however, the defensive commission of array was an order 'de omnibus hominibus defensabilibus in certis comitatibus arraiandis et de eis ducendis custodibus portuum maris ad resistendum inimicis regis'³. Often the commission instructed that the men be arrayed and armed in accordance with the Statute of Winchester, sometimes also specifying that the men be organized into millenaries, centaines, and vintaines⁴.

1. P.R.O., C. 76/34, m. 7. A similar order was sent to the arrayers in Essex.

2. A.E. Prince, 'The Army and Navy', The English Government at Work, ed. Willard and Morris, i.332-93; Powicke, Military Obligation, pp.118-65, 182-209. See also J.E. Morris, The Welsh Wars of Edward I (Oxford, 1901) for the development of commissions of array.

3. P.R.O., C.61/49, m. 26. The commission of June 1337 was accompanied by separate commissions appointing keepers of the maritime lands.

4. E.g., C.P.R., 1334-8, pp.137-9; P.R.O., C. 76/22, m. 23; C. 76/23, m. 20.

The arrayers having mobilized their levies, were then obliged to hold them in readiness to march wherever the keepers of the maritime lands should direct¹. This order was frequently amplified by a clause in the commission which commanded the intence of the arrayers to the keepers of the maritime lands, and which enjoined them to give the keepers all possible aid in matters of defence². Thus a clearly defined hierarchy of arrayers responsible for the mobilization of the local levies and subordinate to the keepers of the maritime lands, who acted as overall commanders, is evident.

While such a double-tiered structure of defensive officials was normal in the period before the early 1370s, there were several occasions on which other royal officials appeared within the defensive system. For the greater security of the realm, overseers of commissioners of array were appointed from time to time. These officials appear to have been intermediate between the commissioners of array and the keepers of the maritime lands. Commissions appointing such officials were issued in July and August 1338, January 1339, and November 1359 only³. The rarity of such appointments suggests experimentation, and they were probably a reaction to the extreme extent of danger prevailing at the times in which they were made.

1. E.g., P.R.O., C. 76/22, mm. 23, 25.

2. E.g., P.R.O., C. 61/50, mm. 7, 11.

3. C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 134 (1338); P.R.O., C. 76/14, m. 16^v (1339); C.P.R., 1358-61, p. 324 (1359). Similar appointments had been made on at least one occasion before the 1330s. Overseers had been appointed in August 1324, although there is a certain ambiguity in the terms of the commissions, and the persons concerned may have merely been arrayers (Parl. Writs, II. ii. 661).

By the commission of July 1338, two or three overseers were appointed within each group of counties to supervise the arrays made by the arrayers and to ensure their smooth running¹. The counties themselves were arranged into seven large groups². The role played by the overseers was a partial combination of some of the duties of the keepers of the maritime lands and some of the duties of the defensive arrayers. They had supervisory powers over the making of the arrays while at the same time were 'to be ready to repel invasions of the French at the request or summons of the keepers of the coast'. These extraordinary appointments were evidently linked with the urgency and gravity of the war, particularly since 1338 was a year which had

1. In the cases of large counties, their subdivisions were grouped together. Separate commissions were almost always issued for each of the Yorkshire ridings and the parts of Lincolnshire. Occasionally this practice was extended to the wapentakes, honours, and liberties of Lancashire (Rot. Scot., i.286) and Yorkshire (Foedera, III. i.456), as well as to the Sussex rapes (P.R.O., C. 76/23, m. 20; C. 81/1758/3).

2. The county groupings were as follows:

	<u>Shire Groupings</u>	<u>No. of Overseers</u>
i.	Hants, Berks, Surrey, Sussex, Oxon, Kent	- 2
ii.	Glos, Worcs, Heref, Salop, Staffs, Warw, Leics	- 2
iii.	Corn, Devon, Som, Dors	- 2
iv.	Essex, Herts, Cambs, Hunts, Norf, Suff, Bucks, Beds, Midd	- 3
v.	Yorks	- 3
vi.	Lancs, Northumb, Cumb, Westm	- 3
vii.	Lincs, Northants, Rut, Notts, Derb	- 2

witnessed several defensive setbacks, and certainly represented a desire to improve the efficiency of the defensive system¹.

Occasionally, commissions of array for defence were incorporated in commissions of another character. Of these, the most frequently linked with the commission of array was the commission of the peace. The joining of a judicial commission to another which had military functions was not as illogical as may at first sight appear. To contemporaries there was an indisputably close connexion between the measures taken for keeping the peace within the realm and those taken for the defence of the realm from external threats. The Statute of Winchester, so frequently referred to in the terms of commissions of array, was basically a peace statute, and the forces raised under the statute were liable for both police and defensive duties.

1. This is clearly shown in the reorganization of the groupings by 1 August. The number of overseers per group increased, while the number of shires per group decreased (C.P.R., 1338-40, pp. 141-2).

	<u>Shire Groupings</u>	<u>No. of Overseers</u>
i.	Hants, Berks, Wilts, Surrey, Sussex, Kent	- 5
ii.	Norf, Suff, Cambs	- 4
iii.	Glos, Heref, Salop	- 5
iv.	Worcs, Warw, Oxon	- 5
v.	Corn, Devon, Dors, Som	- 5
vi.	Cumb, Westm	- 4
vii.	Essex, Herts, Hunts, Beds, Bucks, Midd	- 5*
viii.	Notts, Leics, Derb, Staffs	- 3
ix.	Yorks, Northumb, Lancs	- 4
x.	Lincs, Northants, Rut	- 4

* Plus a further two overseers in December.

Evidently the original system had proved too unwieldy.

The main period in which the two commissions were linked was during the 1330s and 1340s. In July 1338 the first of these joint commissions was issued, making reference to the Statutes of Winchester and Northampton, and bearing instructions 'to array the men of the counties for the defence of the realm against the French, to keep the peace, and to hear and determine trespasses'¹. A clue to the reasons underlying the amalgamation of the two commissions is found in similar joint commissions issued in August. On this occasion, the commissioners were to array the men of the county and to keep the peace, these duties having to be carried out since the king had heard that 'many suspected persons run from county to county to avoid the commissioners'². The suspects mentioned were probably criminals, although 'draft dodgers' seeking to avoid military service may also have been involved.

Further joint commissions on similar lines were issued in April 1347 and in February 1350, but during the 1350s there was a reversion to the practice of issuing separate commissions of array and of the peace³. Although in November 1371 the custodes pacis and the sheriffs were given powers of array and of enforcing the Statute of Labourers, such joint commissions were rare after the renewal of war in 1369⁴.

Occasionally, commissioners of array were linked with the other types of commission. In July 1340, for instance, a joint commission of

1. C.P.R., 1338-40, pp.135-6.

2. Ibid., p. 141.

3. C.P.R., 1345-9, p. 301; P.R.O., C. 47/2/45/26.

4. C.P.R., 1370-4, p.34.

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4. C.P.R., 1370-4, p.34.

array, of the peace, and of Oyer and Terminer was issued¹.

The association of the commission of array with other commissions, notably that of the peace, suggests a desire on the part of the crown for a more uniform administration. The two commissions were similar in many respects. The size of peace commissions in the 1330s and 1340s approximated to that of the commissions of array, three, four or five commissioners being the usual number appointed per shire². Each commission, moreover, already possessed some aspects of the other: arrayers had powers of arrest and imprisonment; while the justices of the peace, in theory at least, had powers to deal with defaulters against the military aspects of the Statute of Winchester³. The connexion between the keeping of the peace and national defence has been already noted, and was strengthened by the fact that, in many instances, the same persons were chosen to serve on both commissions of the peace and on commissions of array⁴.

1. C.P.R., 1340-3, p.12.

2. E. Moir, The Justice of the Peace (Harmondsworth, 1969), p.20.

3. E.g., P.R.O., C. 76/14, m. 16^v; C. 76/21, m. 23. Releases from arrest or distraint frequently appear; e.g., C. 76/23, m. 25^v; C. 76/24, m. 31^v. See B.H. Putnam, 'Shire Officials: Keepers of the Peace and Justices of the Peace', The English Government at Work, ed. Willard and Morris, iii. 213-14. The justices theoretically had jurisdiction over defaulters in the keeping of watches in accordance with the statute. Miss Putnam notes the puzzling lack of references to the keeping of the watches in the records of the justices.

4. Comparison of the personnel of the commissions of array issued on 7 July 1377 (C.P.R., 1377-81, pp. 38 ff.) with that of the peace commissions of 2 July 1377 (ibid., pp.44 ff.) shows that completely different people were appointed by each commission. It thus appears that the separation of the two types of commission was final by this date.

The merger of the two commissions in the 1330s and 1340s should be viewed in the broader context of experimentation in the office of the keepers of the peace rather than as an extension of the powers of the defensive arrayers, although the increase both in the crime rate and in the level of enemy attacks during this period may have been contributory to the merger. The rare appearance of such joint commissions after the late 1350s may be attributed to the temporary decline of the office of the keeper of the peace in the 1350s and 1360s, while the 1360s also witnessed a cessation in enemy attacks. It may well be that the union was considered unsuitable and, moreover, when war was renewed in 1369, it appears that the commission of array veered toward another type of commission with which it had close affinities in the military sphere. Throughout the 1330s, 1340s, and 1350s the general measures taken for defence had involved the appointment of two principal sets of officials, the keepers of the maritime and the defensive arrayers, to control the defensive forces in the coastal shires. By the 1370s, there was a growing tendency to amalgamate the two commissions into a single, larger commission, combining the powers of both. This was to remain the usual practice until the end of the century.

Commissions for the Keeping of the Sea Coasts and of Array during the 1370s and 1380s

The two-tier system of royal defensive officials continued for a short while after the recommencement of the war in 1369¹, but the line of demarcation between the keepers of the maritime lands and the arrayers

1. Hewitt's statement that the defence system was completely modified in 1369 is incorrect ('The Organisation of War', The Hundred Years' War, ed. Fowler, pp.77-8).

was becoming increasingly blurred. Separate commissions of array and de custodienda terre maritime were issued in October 1371¹, but thereafter there is clear evidence towards the amalgamation of the two commissions. In May, June, and July 1372, commissioners of array were appointed for the inland shires of the realm, while in certain coastal shires keepers of the maritime lands, whose commissions embraced arraying and supervising the beacons, were appointed². Keepers of the maritime lands were also appointed in 1373. The Norfolk, Suffolk and Devonshire commissions of May and July combined arraying with the usual duties of keeping the coast, while the keepers appointed in Hampshire in July were further empowered to array both laymen and clergy³.

From 1374 onwards, however, it became customary to issue joint commissions embracing the keeping of the maritime lands and the arraying of the jurati for defence within the maritime shires. Such officials were henceforth known as commissioners of array. The format of the new commissions was identical to those granted with enlarged powers to the keepers of the maritime lands in 1372. The keepers appointed in Kent in July of that year, for instance, were to see to the defence of all places where ships could land; to array all the fencible men and knights according to their status, within and without liberties; to

1. P.R.O., C. 76/54, m. 8.

2. P.R.O., C. 76/55, mm. 14, 27, 34, 35, 37. Arrayers were active in Devonshire in July (C. 76/55, m. 27) and were mentioned in thirteen coastal counties on 12 June (C. 76/55, m. 38).

3. P.R.O., C. 76/56, mm. 9, 21.

compel all who owed service to perform it by distraint or by such other means as they saw fit; to arrange horsemen into constabularies and footmen into centaines and vintaines and to lead them wherever the enemy might land; to erect beacons; to arrest and imprison all rebels; and to do all else expedient for the defence of the realm¹. The terms of this commission compare closely with those of the commissions of array issued in May 1375. By these commissions the arrayers of the coastal shires were to guard all the ports and sea-shores in the county where ships could put in; to resist and destroy all persons wishing to invade the realm by land and sea; to array all the fencible men of the county, furnish them with arms according to their estate, and to lead them against any enemies who entered the realm; to raise beacons to give the alarm; to depute others to help them where necessary and to arrest and imprison rebels, and seize their lands and property².

The similarities between the two commissions are evident, so much so that the difference in the title of each commission is only one of terminology. Clearly, the early 1370s was a period which saw experiments with both sorts of commission, and the crown after 1374 chose to call all such commissions 'commissions of array'. This meant that in the coastal shires, the arrayers became the principal local officials charged with defence, responsible not only for the mobilization of the men of their own shire, but also for the commanding of levies raised in inland shires, where they could call for the intendance of their fellow

1. P.R.O., C. 76/55, m.27.

2. C.F.R., 1374-7, p.152.

arrayers. Their powers also extended to govern all matters pertaining to the safety of the coastal area.

The feature of these joint commissions was their noticeable increase in size from the earlier commissions of array. The amalgamation of two sets of officials automatically resulted in an immediate increase in the size of the commissions. Defensive commissions of array had, however, been gradually increasing in size from the 1330s. Between 1330 and 1360, the numbers of arrayers named in each commission had usually been low. An average commission of this period comprised from two to five persons per shire. Thus, in January 1335, when commissions were issued for each English shire, only two men appeared in each commission, except in three instances in which three arrayers were named¹. By 1338, the average number of arrayers per commission was four. Such was the case in twenty-seven counties or major subdivisions of counties, while five persons were appointed in each of ten other counties.² The slight increase may be attributed to the fact that this series of commissions was the first to embody the terms of the commission of the peace, and that the year 1338 witnessed a defensive crisis.

The size of the commissions remained fairly constant until the cessation of hostilities in 1360. Commissions of 3 October 1359 contained

1. C.P.R., 1334-8, pp.137-9. The exceptions were Derbyshire, the West Riding of Yorkshire, and the parts of Kesteven in Lincolnshire. Two or three arrayers per commission had been the usual numbers during the reigns of Edward I and Edward II.

2. C.P.R., 1338-40, pp.135-9.

from two to six names, with a mean average of four¹. The reiteration of the commissions by Edward III on 16 November, however, saw a significant increase in the size of each. The most striking individual example of this was in Norfolk, where the numbers increased from two to sixteen. Not so immediately apparent was the increase in Yorkshire from eleven, to 134 arrayers². On the latter occasion, commissions in the county were issued on a wapentake basis, although such an increase was exceptional.

From 1369 onwards, there was a tendency towards larger commissions of array. Six to ten commissioners was the average size³, while in some instances the number could be as high as thirteen (East Riding, March 1379; Kent, May 1381), fourteen (Essex, July 1377), or even fifteen (Hampshire, March 1379)⁴. The crucial years, 1385-6, saw in many cases a temporary increase in the size of commissions. Those of January 1385 ranged from four arrayers (in the North Riding of Yorkshire) to twenty-five (in Kent), while the average was thirteen or fourteen⁵. The Kentish commission of May 1386 numbered twenty-six commissioners, but by 1387, commissions had reverted to the sizes typical of the 1370s and

1. Foedera, III. i. 448.

2. Ibid., pp.455-8. These commissions, which gave powers to array all fencible men for defence during the king's absence, to erect beacons, and to compel all men to obey the arrayers, may also have been intended to serve as commissions for the keeping of the coast in the maritime shires. Arrayers in Yorkshire were appointed on a wapentake basis.

3. E.g., January 1377 (E.P.R., 1377-81, pp.38 ff.); April 1377 (C.P.R., 1374-7, p.478); February 1379 (C.P.R., 1377-81, pp.500-2).

4. C.P.R., 1377-81, pp.38 (Essex), 471 (East Riding, Hants, and Dorset), 574 (Kent).

5. C.P.R., 1381-5, p.588.

remained fairly constant until the end of hostilities in 1389¹.

The intensification of the French threat and the inclusion of the keepers of the maritime lands in the 1370s affected the size of the commissions of array, but there was an additional factor which contributed to this increase. After 1369, the sheriff was also specifically included by name in the commission of array. Thus, in March 1369, the king appointed the sheriff and the keepers of the peace in each shire to array the inhabitants for the defence of the realm². The sheriff was again associated in defensive commissions of array in each county in July 1369, and thenceforth was usually named as an arrayer in the royal commissions³.

To an extent a retrograde step, the inclusion of the sheriff in the commission was clearly aimed at closer liaison between the crown's chief administrative officer in the shire and the royal commissioners charged with implementing the measures of defence⁴. His position as an arrayer was confirmed in 1377 by a parliamentary ordinance which declared that the arraying of the jurati ad arma and the watching of the beacons should be the responsibility of the sheriff, the constables, and other ministers of the crown⁵.

1. C.P.R., 1385-9, p.176. In a commission for Kent of 14 May, however, only sixteen persons were named. The increase which occurred at the end of the month coincided with a general escalation of defensive measures (C.P.R., 1381-5, pp.588, 590, 598; C.P.R., 1385-9, pp.79, 181).

2. C.C.R., 1369-74, p.18.

3. Ibid., p.36.

4. See pp.167-72 below.

5. Rot. Parl., iii. 384.

In the 1370s, the commissions of array also underwent changes in their internal structure. Defensive commissions of the 1370s and 1380s usually included a small number of high-ranking local magnates, while the bulk of the commissioners were gentry with lands in the county named in the commission. The patents of appointment did not specify the internal organization or the allocation of duties within each commission, but a hierarchy within the commission is discernible. The persons first named in the patent were usually those of the highest rank. They probably acted as the commanders of the forces raised by the lesser members of the commission, while at the same time possessing the overall responsibility for the array. Taking as a random example the commission of array for Kent of 14 May 1386, one sees that the persons first named were of high social standing: the abbot of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, and John, lord Cobham were notable men in the county, while Simon de Burley, Thomas Trivet and Arnold Savage were closely associated with the king, and Robert Bealknap was chief justice of the Common Bench. The remaining commissioners were gentry who had had previous administrative experience: thirteen had been justices of the peace at some time (twelve on more than one occasion); six had also been sheriff of the county; two had also served on commissions de walliis et fossatis; and one had been knight of the shire for Kent¹.

Here, the distinction between senior and lesser arrayers is evident. This had not been apparent in defensive commissions of array during the first phase of the war. None of the commissions issued in July 1338,

1. C.P.R., 1385-9, p.176.

for example, contained any members higher than of knightly rank, yet the overseers of the arrays appointed in that month were of comital rank, or were grandz of the first order¹. In the same period, the keepers of the maritime lands were frequently drawn from the higher ranks of society. Thus in 1339, keepers of the maritime lands in shires on the south coast included the earls of Arundel, Devon, Huntingdon and Surrey².

The change from a bilateral system of defensive officials to a system of single officials in the 1370s, together with the minor modifications which the system underwent throughout the period after 1337, was clearly influenced by the crown's defensive needs, which became more pressing as the century wore on. In a period of great danger, such as the 1370s were, it was essential that the system of national defence should function effectively. The interests of several groups of officials working for the defence of the coasts often clashed. In consequence, the efficiency of the defensive system ran the risk of being reduced. The association of the sheriff in the commissions of array and the linking of the commissions of array with commissions de custodienda terre maritime was probably aimed at streamlining the system of national defence thereby making it more efficient.

1. C.P.R., 1338-40, pp.134, 141. For example, out of five overseers in the group of coastal counties from Hampshire to Kent, three were earls.

2. C.P.R., 1338-40, pp.134, 215; C.C.R., 1339-41, pp.19, 86, 254, 444-5.

TABLE 2

Numbers of Keepers of the Maritime Lands appointed on 4 August 1324 (Parl. Writs., II. ii. 664).

Shire	No. of keepers	Shire	No. of keepers
Kent	2	Cumb & Westm	2
Hants	2	Lincs	2
Isle of Wight	2	Devon	2
Dors	2	Essex	2
Northumb	3	Yorks	3
Norf & Suff	2	Lancs	2

TABLE 3

Numbers of Keepers of the Maritime Lands and Arrayers appointed March 1338, with County Groupings (P.R.O., C. 61/50, m. 7).

Shires	No. of keepers	No. of Arrayers
Hants *, Berks, Wilts	4	3 (Hants), 3 (Wilts)
Corn *	4	3
Glos *, Heref, Worcs	4	2 (Glos), 2 (Worcs), 3 (Heref)
Lincs *, Leics, Northants, Rut	4	2 (Lindsey), 3 (Kesteven), 2 (Holland), 3 (Leics), 5 (Northants), 2 (Rut)
Lancs *, Salop, Staffs	4	3 (Lancs), 3 (Salop), 2 (Staffs)
Sussex *, Surrey	3	2 (Sussex), 2 (Surrey)
Norf *, Suff *, Cambs, Hunts	4	3 (Norf), 2 Suff), 2 (Cambs), 2 (Hunts)
Kent *	4	4
Som *, Dors *	2	3 (Som), 3 (Dors)
Essex *, Herts, Midd	3	3 (Essex), 2 (Midd)
Yorks *, Derb, Notts	4	4 (W.R. Yorks), 3 (N.R. Yorks), 3 (E.R. Yorks), 3 (Notts), 2 (Derb)
Devon *	1	5

* Maritime shire in which the troops raised in the group performed defensive service.

TABLE 4

Numbers of Keepers of the Maritime Lands and Arrayers appointed
3 March 1346 (P.R.O., C. 76/22, mm. 24, 25).

Shires	No. of Keepers	No. of Arrayers
Lincs *, Leics, Northants, Rut	3 (Kesteven) } 5 (Lindsey) } 12 4 (Holland) }	4 plus sheriff (Northants), 4 " " (Leics), 3 " " (Rut)
Essex *, Midd, Herts	7 plus sheriff **	4 " " (Midd)
Glos *, Worcs, Heref	4 plus sheriff **	4 " " (Worcs), 5 " " (Heref)
Hants *, Wilts, Berks	6 plus sheriff **	3 " " (Wilts), 4 " " (Berks)
Norf *, Suff *, Cambs, Hunts	5 plus sheriff ** (Suff), 4 plus sheriff ** (Norf)	3 " " (Cambs), 4 " " (Hunts)

* maritime shires.

** i.e., sheriff of the maritime shire of the group.

CHAPTER SIX

LOCAL DEFENSIVE OFFICIALS AND THE DEFENSIVE FORCES

The posse comitatus, or defensive force of the shire, which was raised in times of danger was made up of smaller units of men based upon the existing internal administration of the county. The largest of these units was based upon the hundred. The posse hundredi, in turn, was itself made up of contingents of men arrayed on the basis of each vill belonging to the hundred, and within each vill the men were arrayed and organized into *centaines* and *vintaines*, each nominally comprising a hundred, and twenty men respectively. These units, under the command of their local officers, performed the garde de la mer.

The keepers of the maritime lands and the arrayers held their commissions from the crown. In the day to day execution of their duties, however, they received substantial assistance from other, lesser officials. The principal of these officials were the constables of the hundreds; beneath them were the lesser constables of boroughs and vills. The duties of these constables were not solely military but they never the less played a prominent role in the defensive system as leaders of the local units of the jurati within

the shire. Below the constables were the centenars and vintenars, who acted as N.C.O.s within each borough and vill, and who were in closest contact with the local levies.

Such officials had very little contact with the central government. Whereas arrayers and keepers of the maritime lands were commissioned by royal letters patent, the constables looked towards the local communities for their appointments, possibly being chosen on an annual basis¹. Their links with the machinery of central government were thus indirect ones: in the military sphere, through working with the royal defensive commissioners and the sheriff of the shire; in their peace-enforcing role, through contact with royal judicial officials. Moreover, since the constables and their subordinates looked towards the local community rather than towards the central government, the crown rarely issued orders directly to them. Rather, royal writs containing defensive instructions were usually sent to the arrayers and keepers of the maritime lands as overall commanders of the county levies, or to the sheriff. It was then their responsibility to pass on any instructions to their subordinates. Thus, in September

1. On the vexed question of the election of constables, see H.B. Simpson, 'The Office of Constable', E.H.R., x (1895), 625-41; H.M. Cam, 'Shire Officials: Coroners, Constables and Bailiffs', The English Government at Work, ed. Willard and Morris, iii. 169. Powicke (Military Obligation, pp.129-30) makes it clear that these officials were chosen (eligere) rather than elected. On at least one occasion constables were appointed by royal writ, although such a practice was exceptional (B.H. Putnam, Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, Edward III to Richard III (Cambridge, Mass., 1938), p. xxxvii, citing C.P.R., 1321-4, p.61 and Parl. Writs, II. ii. 170-1).

1326, when the king ordered that the constables of the hundreds and vills of Norfolk should meet to discuss and advise upon matters relating to the defence of the realm, to organize the levies of the hundreds, and to erect beacons, it was to the keepers of the maritime lands that the writ was addressed, and not directly to the constables themselves¹. Moreover, any orders passed on to the constables by the defensive commissioners were probably oral, but even if any such orders were in fact committed to writing, it is doubtful whether the constables would have bothered to preserve the record. In consequence, little written evidence pertaining directly to the constables and their subordinates has survived. A further problem in the question of the lesser local defensive officials is posed by the fair degree of autonomy which the constables possessed. In times of military emergency, they may have had powers to act independently on their own initiative as circumstances dictated².

Consequently, it is difficult to ascertain to the full the roles played in matters of defence by these lesser officials. For the constables, the sole references occur in statutes, in documents pertaining to their immediate superiors, and in the few muster rolls.

1. E. Coke, Fourth Institutes (London, 1664), cap. 25, pp.149-50.

2. Cam, 'Shire Officials', p.169. The prompt action of the East Anglian levies under their local leaders in combatting the Danish attack of 1366 suggests that such subordinate officials often did act on their own initiative (Chronicon Johannis de Reading et Anonymi Cantuariensis, p.181. See also above, p.34).

and rolls of agistments to arms which survive from the period. For the centenars and vintenars, the main source of evidence is the muster rolls. Despite the dearth of documentary evidence, it would be mistaken to underestimate the importance of the lesser officials in the system of national defence. For many of the jurati, the constables, centenars and vintenars were the chief, and often the only military officials with whom they would have prolonged contact. Such contacts would not just be in the military sphere, since the constables and their subordinates were themselves members of the local community, and the links were further forged by the general obligations to keep the peace, in which both constables and community had important roles to play¹. Furthermore, while the keepers of the maritime lands and the arrayers were appointed on a temporary basis to cope with a specific defensive need in times of danger only, the constables, at least, were permanent officials.

The subordinate local officials, under the overall direction of the royal defensive commissioners, were responsible for the actual organization and mobilization of the local defensive forces at the lowest levels. In this capacity, they have aptly been described as the natural assistants to the arrayers, and as the leaders of the local units of fencible men arrayed under statute². Their development as such is traceable from the early thirteenth century, although local leaders must have been operative before the earliest documented evidence. The defensive arrangements of 1205 had established a

1. One must remember that the keepers of the maritime lands and the arrayers were themselves usually local landholders, and often the lords of those whom they arrayed.

2. Powicke, Military Obligation, p.128.

hierarchy of constables for counties, hundreds, boroughs, and vills¹. The constable of the shire was at the apex of this hierarchy, and was endowed with wide powers; he was to receive the intendance of the whole county, was to appoint the lesser constables, and was to make note of the numbers of their arms. The shire constables were, in fact, the precursors of the later commissioners of array and keepers of the maritime lands, upon whom devolved their powers².

If the chief constables of the shire were the forerunners of the later defensive commissioners, the forerunners of the later local constables were the constables of the hundreds and vills mentioned in 1205. By 1230, the chief constables had disappeared, and writs for defence appointed one constable in each rural vill and several constables in cities and boroughs in relation to their size, to array the local levies³. By 1242, a more sophisticated system was in evidence. The hundred constable was given authority over the constables of vills within his hundred, thereby becoming the main local military official in the shire below the sheriff and the military officials appointed by the crown⁴. Although by the fourteenth century the ultimate responsibility for arraying had passed to other officials, the hierarchy of constables remained basically the same. Their duties

1. See Ch. V above.

2. See Ch.V. above.

3. C.R., 1227-31, pp.395, 398-402. The description of the development of the constables is largely based on Powicke's work.

4. Stubbs, Select Charters, p.364.

had, moreover, been extended by the Statute of Winchester, and they still played an active part in raising the local levies as auxiliaries of the royal arrayers.

The Statute of Winchester of 1285, important both as a peace statute and as a militia statute, underlined the close connexion between the policing of the shire and its defence from enemy attacks. The very men who were jurati ad arma were also sworn to pursue the hue and cry, and had other peace-keeping responsibilities. In each of these functions, the men of the shire were led by the same local officials, the local constables. The role of the constable as a 'police officer attendant on the justices and ministers of the crown' had been fully discussed by other writers¹, and it is not intended to discuss it here. In his military role, none the less, the constable was still concerned with local justice, and it is difficult to separate these two functions. By the Statute of Winchester, the burden of enforcing the obligations of the jurati towards the provision of arms fell upon the constables of the hundred; in each hundred and franchise, two constables were appointed to take the view of arms twice a year, and were empowered to present defaulters before the justices in eyre². The hundred constables' defensive role was further emphasised in the statute by their responsibility to present defaulters against the suit of watch and ward, and also all persons who had lodged strangers for

1. Simpson, 'The Office of Constable', pp.625-41; Cam, 'Shire Officials', pp.167-9; Putnam, Proceedings before the J.P.s, pp.i ff.

2. And, by the later fourteenth century, before the Justices of the Peace. I have been unable to find any instances of such presentments.

whom they could not vouch¹.

The constables of the hundred were the link between the local levies of the hundred and the officials appointed for defence by the crown. In this capacity, they have rightly been described as the 'permanent captains' of the posse hundredi². They had control not merely of the fencible men of their hundred, but also of the subordinate officials who led the contingents from the vills. The defensive writ of 1326 relating to Norfolk strongly implies the supremacy of the hundred constables over those of the vills, while the muster roll for the Middlesex hundreds of Elthorne, Spelthorne and Isleworth of c. 1338 clearly shows the hierarchy of the lesser local officials and the organization of the smaller contingents which went to make up the posse hundredi³. The roll is arranged under the headings of hundreds, and within each hundred are the subheadings of the vills lying in the hundred. Immediately beneath each hundred heading appear the names of the chief constables of the hundred. Following each vill name are the names of the constables of the vill, who are here described as subconstabularii. Beneath them, the men are ordered into centaines, the names of the centenars appearing, and each centaine is made up of vintaines, each under the command of a vintemar. From this evidence, the chain of command is clearly seen.

The functions of the constables of the hundreds and vills ranged

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1. Select Charters, p.466.
 2. Cam, 'Shire Officials', pp.167, 169.
 3. Greater London R.O., Acc. 1085, F.P. 9 (Newdegate Papers). See Appendix 5a for the muster of Spelthorne hundred contained in this roll.

further than the mere organizing of the local levies. Their role in advising in defensive matters in 1326 has been mentioned above. In 1326 also, the constables of the hundreds and 'omnibus alliis subconstabulariis' were responsible for the erection of the beacons, although by the 1330s this responsibility had passed to the royal defensive commissioners. None the less, even when the responsibility for the beacons had been transferred to higher officials, it is probable that the daily maintenance of the beacons and supervision of the watches at them were delegated to the constables. The hundred constables were responsible for paying the watchers at the beacons from the beconagium or moneys levied in the hundred for the upkeep of beacons. They were also to rectify any defects in the watches and to ensure that all men of the hundred were agisted to arms. In the performance of their duties, they were to be advised by the constables of the vills.

The writ of 1326 gives an insight into many of the constable's functions. Since there was consultation made with the constable of the hundred, it is clear that his advice on defensive matters was well respected. Evidently, he was an important and trusted official in the system of defence. It is clear too that although the hundred constable was superior to the lesser constables, he conferred with them and worked in close conjunction with them. In view of his contacts with the royal defensive commissioners and the leaders of the small local units of fencible men, the role of the constable of the hundred was an important one linking the royal organization with the men in the field. The constables of the boroughs and vills -- the 'petty constables' in Lambard's terminology -- working under the hundred constables, as well as having control over the contingents

from their settlement, also appear to have had charge of the communal arms of the vill or borough¹.

Whatever incidental duties the constables had in matters of defence, their main importance from the point of view of this study lay in the organization of the local levies at grass-roots level. In this respect, the extant muster rolls, rolls of the view of arms, and of agistments to arms provide us with the best evidence. It is natural that the chief constables of the hundred would appear in rolls of the view of arms and of agistment to arms, since their duties in these respects were prescribed by statute. Thus in the undated roll of agistments to arms for Carleford hundred, Suffolk les chefs conestables head the roll, taking precedence even over the arrayers who are also named². In the Middlesex roll of c. 1338, the chief constables again head the roll. Within boroughs, the borough constables usually took charge on such occasions. Such was the case in the agistment to arms made in Ipswich in 1326 and in the view of arms made in the Norwich leet of Wymer between 1355 and 1370³.

On some occasions, it appears that other officials supervised the view of arms. In coastal shires the keepers of the maritime lands sometimes personally undertook such a review, as in Kent in 1337⁴.

1. Cam, 'Shire Officials', pp.170-1; W.Lambarde, The Duties of Constables, Borsholders, Tithingmen and other such Low Ministers of the Peace (London, 1583), pp.5-6.

2. P.R.O., C. 47/2/39/26.

3. P.R.O., C. 47/2/23/42 (Ipswich); W. Hudson, 'Norwich Militia in the Fourteenth Century', Norfolk Archaeology, xiv (1901), 305-6 (Norwich). A similar view of arms was held for the Norwich leets in July 1355 before the Justices of the Peace, with the constables appearing 'plene armati' (ibid., pp.295-300).

4. T. Hearne, Textus Roffensis (Oxford, 1720), pp.236-42.

The agistamentum hominum ad arma in the Suffolk hundred of Blyth in 1325-6 was supervised directly by the arrayers, while the Ipswich muster of 1326 and the Norwich musters of 1355 may have been supervised by the Justices of the Peace¹.

The presence of arrayers and Justices of the Peace at the view of arms seems to contradict the clause of the Statute of Winchester which provided that 'en chescun hundred e fraunchise eleus deus conestables a fere la veue des armes'. Since, however, the hundred constables were empowered by statute to present defaulters in the view of arms before the justices in eyre and later the Justices of the Peace, the presence of the justices at the view of arms may represent the elimination of one stage of the procedure. The presence of the arrayers in many of the muster rolls, moreover, emphasises the connexion between them and their subordinate officials and explains the frequent citing of the Statute of Winchester in the terms of the commissions of array².

At the lowest level of organization, the local levies were in the charge of the centenars and vintenars. Although the titles of these

1. P.R.O., C. 47/2/39/14 (Blyth). The heading of the Ipswich roll is ambiguous, but could suggest that the agistments were made in the presence of the Justices of the Peace. See Appendix 5b.

2. E.g., C.P.R., 1338-40, pp.135-9; C.P.R., 1374-7, pp.500-2; Foedera II. i. 449. Although frequently referred to in commissions of array, the Statute of Winchester as the basis of assessment had, to an extent, become a fiction by the fourteenth century, mainly through the new assessments resulting from reorganization of jurati service in the 1340s. The statute, however, did provide the foundation of the basis organizational structure. See Powicke, Military Obligation, pp.149, 190-7.

junior officials suggest the numbers of men for whom they were responsible, in actual fact, the size of such units often only approximated to the numbers. In the Middlesex musters in the villis of Staines and Yeveney mentioned above, the centenars were in charge of five vintaines, which each comprised twenty men. Such symmetry was not always the case. Sometimes the number of vintaines making up a centaine would be less than the expected five, possibly reflecting a shortage of fencible men in the vill. The Ipswich muster roll for 1324-5 contains two centaines of three and two vintaines respectively; that of the Blything hundred in Suffolk in c. 1346 has two centaines which are each made up of three vintaines only; while the contemporary muster roll for Colney hundred, Suffolk, has one centaine of only four vintaines¹. At Lose hundred, Suffolk, in 1326, the first centaine was composed of four vintaines, while the second centaine was not ordered into vintaines, although it included 145 men².

The size of vintaines also often varied, sometimes markedly, and frequently within the same roll. In the Middlesex muster of c. 1338, each vintenaar had nineteen men under him. This was also the case in the vintaines of the vill of South Elmham in the Suffolk hundred of Wangford, at Dunwich in 1346, and Ipswich in 1325-6³. Elsewhere, as at Norham, Norfolk, in 1336, vintaines comprised twenty men plus the

1. P.R.O., C. 47/2/23/42 (Ipswich); C. 47/2/58/18 (Blything); C. 47/2/58/19 (Colney).

2. Parl. Writs, II. ii. 744-8.

3. P.R.O., C. 47/2/58/22 (Wangford); C. 47/2/58/23, 24 (Dunwich); C. 47/2/23/42 (Ipswich).

vintemar¹. But it was common to find vintaines of different sizes even within the same muster. At Framlingham in 1326 the size of the vintaines ranged from eighteen to twenty-four men, plus the vintemar; at Blything hundred, Suffolk in 1346 vintaines of nineteen men plus the vintemar and twenty men plus the vintemar occur; at Stabeton and Lennington-cum-Stratton in the same year eighteen or nineteen men plus the vintemar appear; while in the rape of Hastings in 1339, vintaines varied from twelve to thirty-four men plus the vintemar².

The term 'vintaine' was thus often only a general indication of the size of the basic unit within the shire for the mobilization of fencible men. The size of these units was often probably affected by the numbers of fencible men within the population of a vill, but on many occasions irregularly-sized vintaines possibly reflected a lack of organizational ability on the part of the lesser officials. The Framlingham muster roll of 1326 certainly betrays a lack of organization.

The arrangement of the local levies into units of mobilization was based upon tradition and enforced by royal writs. When the commissioners of array were instructed to array the fencible men of the shire, to place them in hundreds, centaines, and vintaines, and to send

1. P.R.O., E. 101/19/37.

2. Parl. Writs, II. ii. 744-8 (Framlingham). The organization into vintaines becomes haphazard in the latter part of this roll. In Dallinghoo and Hoo, for instance, sixty men and one vintemar were named, while in other vills one vintemar and twenty-eight men occur twice. P.R.O., C. 47/2/58/18 (Blything); C. 47/2/58/19 (Stabeton and Lennington-cum-Stratton); C. Dawson, History of Hastings Castle (2 vols., London, 1904), i. 175-81 (Hastings).

them to the coast, it is clear that they took the role of supervisors, and delegated the actual organization of the lesser units to the constables and their subordinates.

But there were instances where units smaller than the vintaine of about twenty men were employed. Such smaller units were not, however, used in the mobilization of the local forces. Smaller groups of men were employed, for instance, in conjunction with watches at the beacons. The watches of 1326, for instance, were made by groups of six men by day and six by night¹. Four, five or six men were to attend the beacons in 1337². In both cases this was an increase on the three men by day and three by night who were to watch on the coast in 1324³. The Statute of Winchester, moreover, had prescribed watches of sixteen men at the gates of cities, of twelve men in boroughs, and of four or six according to the number of inhabitants, in rural townships⁴.

We now turn to the question of what sort of fighting force was raised in the shires from the jurati ad arma by the commissions of array. Firstly, it is clear from the muster rolls that the constables, centenars, and vintenars were not merely organizers of the lesser units of the posse comitatus. They also acted as junior commanders in the field, and their appearance in arms in the muster rolls confirms

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1. Coke, Fourth Institutes, pp.149-51.
 2. Foedera, II. ii. 996.
 3. C.I.M., 1307-49, p.209, no.839.
 4. Select Charters, p.465.

this. They too were jurati ad arma, and appear in the rolls agisted to arms in proportion to their holdings of lands or goods. Beneath them, the levies were themselves obliged to provide themselves with arms in ratio to the amount of property which they held. We first examine the nature of this obligation.

The Statute of Winchester was to remain essentially the chief arbiter in measures for national defence and the keeping of the peace throughout the fourteenth century. From the defensive point of view, its main importance lay in its careful distinction of the provision of arms by all who were jurati ad arma, in accordance with the extent of their property. By the statute, all persons who possessed fifteen librates of land or forty marks in goods per annum were to equip themselves with hauberq, iron helm, sword, knife, and horse. Those with lands worth an annual £10, or with goods to the value of twenty marks were assessed to similar personal arms, but minus the horse. Holders of lands worth £5 were to have a quilted doublet, cap or iron, sword, and knife, and persons holding lands of between 40s. and 100s. in value were to have sword, bow and arrows, and a knife. Of the two remaining groups of property holders, those with less than 40s. a year in lands were to have gisarmes, knives, and other lesser weapons, and those possessing less than twenty marks in goods were to provide themselves with swords, knives, and other lesser arms. All other persons falling outside the above categories were to be equipped with bows and arrows if they lived outside the confines of the forest, and forest-dwellers were to have bows and

bolts¹.

The provisions of the statute were not an innovation, but were rather a revision of the obligation to the provision of arms, which had first been laid down by Henry II's Assize of Arms of 1181, and which had been tempered by the writs of arms of 1233, 1242 and 1253². Although the Statute of Winchester was to remain during the fourteenth century, the basis of the obligation of the populace to provide themselves with arms, being twice officially reiterated during Edward III's reign³, it did not have the ultimate word in such obligations. Further definitions of the obligation to provide arms were made in the fourteenth century, among them the extension by legislation of the 1330s and 1340s of such an obligation to the holders of land between the value of £15, the highest category mentioned in the Statute of Winchester, and £40, the minimum requirement of the knightly class⁴.

1. Ibid., pp.464-5; Stats.Realm, i.96 ff. For a detailed description of many of the weapons described in this chapter, see Select Cases in the Court of King's Bench, ed. G.O. Sayles (Selden Soc., 1939), iii, pp. civ, cv, and nos. 76, 108, 124, 126, 135, 136, 138, 146, 164, 178, 187; S.J. Herben, 'Arms and Armor in Chaucer', Speculum, xii (1937), 475-87. See also Glossary.

2. Select Charters, pp.183-4 (1181); ibid., p.355; C.R., 1227-31, p.595 (1230); C.R., 1231-4, p.318 (1233); C.R., 1237-42, pp.482-3, Select Charters, pp.362-5 (1242); C.R., 1251-3, pp.492-3 (1253). On the significance of the four writs, see Powicke, Military Obligation, pp.82-95.

3. Stats.Realm, i.255 (1327), 321 (1351).

4. C.P.R., 1343-5, pp.427-8.

The existence of muster rolls enables one to compare the arms actually borne by the local levies with the obligatory prescriptions of the statute¹. The rolls themselves fall into three main types: muster rolls, rolls of the view of arms, and rolls of agistments to arms. The three types are similar to one another in form. The muster rolls are usually the returns of the officials charged with reviewing the muster of the local levies, and resemble the rolls of the view of arms. The view of arms, held twice yearly by the constables of the hundred, was entered on a roll, and the results certified to the justices of the peace within the shire. The rolls of agistments to arms were of a similar nature, containing reports on the amount of property held by individuals, together with the corresponding amount of arms which they were obliged to furnish. It is clear that the person thus agisted to arms had the choice of serving with the stipulated amount of arms, or else of providing a substitute suitably equipped to serve instead of him. This was indeed the case when a person held lands or goods in excess of the equipment rating for one man, and so he had to ensure that he provided other men suitably armed to meet the whole requirements of his possessions. The principle of providing men in proportion to the value of lands held was in force from at least 1298, and the reigns of Edward II and his son saw

1. Not a great many rolls relating to the musters of defensive levies exist from the fourteenth century. The most fruitful source is P.R.O. Chancery Miscellanea, particularly in bundle 2, Army and Navy, files C. 47/2/21, 23, 25, 39, 41, 45, 58. In Exchequer Accounts, Miscellaneous, Army, Navy and Ordinance, E.101/19/37 and E.101/612/50 are of particular relevance, while occasional references to musters occur in bundles E.101/15 to E.101/41. The local record offices of Greater London, Kent, Norfolk, and Shrewsbury possess muster rolls from the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, but the numbers are slight, and each office has rarely more than one or two rolls. The assisa armora in villa Radinge of 1311-12 referred to in H.M.C. 11th Rept. (1881), pp.170-1 has been completely destroyed by damp.

further elaborations of this idea¹. It was also applicable when a man held lands in more than one county, and would have to find substitutes for the places in which he could not serve in person. In 1337, for example, the prior of Rochester and several other landholders were each assessed to provide men in proportion to their holdings for the watch held at a place called la Yevlade in Hoo hundred, Kent. The prior was assessed at three men-at-arms, four others were assessed at two men-at-arms, and the remainder at one². In other cases, a person might be expected to find substitutes because he was too old or infirm to serve in person, or else because she was a woman; in either case that person was still expected to fulfil his or her obligation³.

Turning to the evidence of the muster rolls, what, then, were the weapons carried by the local levies? The most striking feature

1. Parl. Writs., II.i.320. Persons with land worth £30 and over were to provide more than one man-at-arms. By the 1340s, the assessments were based on units of £5 and £10. The Bedfordshire roll of c. 1346 (C. 47/2/41/2-3) and the Cornwall roll (C. 47/2/41/5), show the following assessments: £5 in land - 1 archer; £10 in land - 1 hobelar; £20 - 1 man-at-arms; £30 - 1 man-at-arms & 1 archer; £40 - 1 man-at-arms, 1 hobelar, 1 archer; £50 - 2 men-at-arms; £60 - 2 men-at-arms & 1 hobelar; 100 marks - 2 men-at-arms, 1 hobelar, 1 archer; £100 - 4 men-at-arms. These rates were the result of writs of 1334 and 1339. See A.E. Prince, 'The Army and Navy', The English Government at Work, i. 351-6.

2. Heame, Textus Roffensis, p.235.

3. E.g., Hudson, 'Norwich Militia', pp.282, 298.

of the evidence available is the suprisingly low percentage of persons armed with bows. This is all the more startling when one bears in mind the impact which the English longbow had in the foreign wars of the fourteenth century. It has been remarked that the lost Reading muster roll of 1311-12 and the 1326 muster in Lose hundred, Suffolk revealed a high proportion of archers, although the writer admits that a similar muster held in 1319 at Bridport in Dorset revealed no bows at all¹. However, closer scrutiny reveals this conclusion to be wrong. Out of 268 men reviewed at Reading in the above muster, only forty-one were equipped with bows and arrows. A similar story is told in the roll of the Lose hundred muster. Taking the muster of men from the first centaine (that of Framlingham) in this roll (the other centaines of the hundred do not specify what arms were carried by each man, so may be ignored), and omitting the centenar and vintemar, one sees that the first vintaine of eighteen men contained only eight persons armed with bows and arrows. In the second vintaine, only five men out of nineteen carried a bow. The third vintaine of twenty-one men contained no bowmen at all, while of the fourth vintaine of twenty-four men, only five were archers. (There was no fifth vintaine, since the organization of the roll becomes haphazard after the fourth vintaine).

It may thus be seen that far from there being a high proportion of bowmen, quite the reverse was the case. And this is not a trait

1. Powicke, Military Obligation, pp.164-5. The Lose hundred muster is printed in Parl. Writs, II.ii.744-8, while the Bridport muster is cited in H.M.C., 6th Rept. (1877), p.491 (Dorset R.O., F.G.I, Muster Roll 2490 (Bridport Corporation Records)).

common only in the rolls of the early fourteenth century. Later rolls show similar deficiencies in the number of archers arrayed. For instance, the roll for the Middlesex hundred of Elthorne of c. 1338, which contains seventy-six names, including those of the officers, reveals only thirteen bowmen. The hundreds of Elthorne and Spelthorne on the same roll reveal a similarly meagre proportion of archers¹. A series of returns of arrays made about 1346 in the Suffolk hundreds of Blything, Colney, and Wangford, together with one from each of the boroughs of Ipswich and Dunwich, show a similarly low percentage of archers in the array².

However, some later rolls do, in fact, show an increase in the numbers of men arrayed as archers. The rolls for the Norwich leets of Wymer and Mancroft, which date from the two decades after 1350, bear witness to the large body of bowmen arrayed in the two leets -- fifty-seven in Mancroft and fifty-eight in Wymer³. Even as early as 1339, the muster roll of the rape of Hastings showed a substantial proportion of men armed with bows. Out of a total of thirty-six vintaines of irregular size, nine vintaines were composed entirely of bowmen, and in a further five vintaines, over half the men arrayed were equipped with bows⁴.

The documentary evidence is unfortunately too sparse to enable

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1. Greater London R.O., Acc. 1085, F.P. 9, mm. 1, 2.
 2. P.R.O., C. 47/2/58/17-24.
 3. Hudson, 'Norwich Militia', pp.302-6.
 4. Dawson, Hist. of Hastings Castle, i. 175-8.

one to create a properly quantified picture. Too many anomalies also remain. For instance, in the 1355 view of arms made in the leet of Conesford in the city of Norwich, which only slightly antedates the returns for the leets of Mancroft and Wymer, the number of men arrayed as archers is nowhere near the figures in the latter two cases. Of a total of 147 men arranged roughly within one centaine, three vintaines, and the rest grouped according to their status, only six men appeared with bows and a further three were obliged to provide an archer in addition to their serving themselves¹.

Evidently, a combination of differing factors had an influence on the number of bows which appeared in these rolls. Differences of time and place possibly had a bearing, especially on the low numbers of archers in the earlier rolls. Powicke explains their total absence from the Bridport muster of 1319 as possibly due to economic depression². It may also be that even as late as the 1330s, the use of the bow in England was not so widespread as is believed. After all, the first national provision regarding the compulsory practice of archery was not to be instituted until 1363³. Large-scale military involvement overseas may have accounted for the scarcity of bows in the Suffolk musters of 1345-6. Although much depended upon prevailing conditions, a general trend towards a greater number of bows in the local levies may be discerned as the century progressed. The returns of arrays made in the north and east ridings of Yorkshire an 1369 show a

1. Hudson, 'Norwich Militia', pp.295-9.

2. Powicke, Military Obligation, p.164.

3. Foedera, III. ii. 704.

substantial increase in the numbers of men arrayed as archers, so much so that the archers by far outnumbered the other classes of troops¹. It appears that the standards of arming in general underwent gradual improvement: the differences in the standards in the muster rolls of the early fifteenth century when compared with those of one hundred years earlier are striking. The inadequacies of the local levies as reflected in their arms may have been one of the reasons why the crown in the fourteenth century sought other sources of troops for overseas campaigns. However, the dangers of generalization cannot be overstressed.

The archers of the local levies were drawn from two main classes according to the statute. On the one hand, there were the owners of land worth between 40s. and 100s. a year; on the other hand, the statute was less specific, merely stating that 'tuz les autres qi aver pount, eient arcs e setes hors des forestes'. This was open to interpretation in at least two ways: firstly, that the bow was to be the weapon of persons who did not belong to any of the propertied

1. P.R.O., C. 47/2/45/22 (20 March 1369). The numbers of troops arrayed by the custodes pacis were as follows:
North Riding - 27 men-at-arms, 22 armed men, 24 hobelars, 600 archers
East Riding - 40 men-at-arms, 29 armed men, 26 hobelars, 500 archers
It appears that these troops were not, however, to be used in defence of their native county, but that they were intended for service elsewhere, on the Scottish Marches. The differences in standards of the troops used as auxiliaries in the defence of their native shire and of those elected to serve elsewhere must be stressed. Although service on the March could be classed as defensive (as it was by the Edwardian monarchs), there is evidence which suggests that levies from southern shires serving on the March were placed by contemporaries in the same category as those serving abroad. For a fuller discussion of this, see Harriss, King, Parliament, and Public Finance in Medieval England, pp. 385-9.

classes, in other words, those from the lowest social class; the second interpretation was that anyone who could provide himself with a bow should have one. Since the statute is a trifle vague in its prescription of bows, this may contribute to the shortage of bows pointed out above. Broadly speaking, however, it appears from the surviving muster rolls that archers in the local levies were usually either from the 40s. to 100s. yeoman class, or, more commonly, from the landless classes. In the roll of the Norfolk musters made in October 1336, the archers appear as a separate élite group at the head of the roll. All were described as holding lands and tenements worth either 40s., 60s., or five marks a year, which would place them firmly in the category prescribed by the statute¹.

Evidence shows, however, that usually archers who appeared in the local musters were not armed to the degree demanded of the 40s. to 100s. class, thus it is reasonable to suppose that they came from the lowest social group. The archers of the 1326 Lose hundred muster were certainly of the lower class. Only two bore the bow, sword, and knife of the 40s. to 100s. freeholder, while the majority had only bows and arrows, and knives². The bowmen of the Middlesex muster in the following decade were similarly armed, as were those of the Suffolk musters of 1345-6³. In the Blything hundred muster in 1346, a positive class distinction was made: the roll

1. P.R.O., E. 101/19/37.

2. Parl. Writs, II. ii. 744-8.

3. Greater London R.O., Acc. 1085, F.P. 9 (Middlesex); P.R.O., C. 47/2/23/42, C. 47/2/58/18-24 (Suffolk).

differentiates between persons with property and those without it -- the 'homines terras et catalla non habentes' and 'homines terras et tenemencia non habentes'¹. Within the groups of landless persons are eight archers armed with bow and arrows and a knife. The remainder of the group are equipped with a motley selection of arms. It seems that in the first half of the century at least, the majority of archers in the defensive levies came from the lower classes. The degree of arming of the levies, however, generally speaking, fluctuated according to the comparative wealth of the area. It is no understatement to say that the levies of a substantially well-off town would, on the whole, be better armed than contemporary levies in rural districts.

Turning to the other weapons carried by the local levies, one notices immediately that the universal arm of all from the arrayers down the humblest rank and file was the knife (cultellus, coustell). Usually supplemented by one or other more substantial types of weapon, it may be regarded as the bare minimum requirement. It is rare, however, to find men armed with only a knife. In addition to the knife, the most common arms of the rank and file were those which fell into the category of menues armes or lesser weapons. The statute gives some indication of what these lesser arms were: it implied that swords, gisarmes, and knives were thus defined. A writ of 1336 included poleaxes and staves in this definition². Reference to the muster rolls shows that such arms were indeed widely used. For example, the first virtaine of the Spelthorne hundred muster of c. 1338

1. P.R.O., C. 47/2/58/18; C. 47/2/39/14-18.

2. Rot. Scot., i. 459-61.

was made up of eight men armed with 'gladio et cultello' and six with 'arce, sagittis et cultellis', arms which would place them in the bracket of those holding twenty marks or less in goods.

The weapons specified by statute and in the writ also appear in abundance: in all musters, a profusion of glaives, staves, and pole-axes occurs. However, other weapons frequently appear. The bill, a staff weapon similar to the gisarme, was very common, although not so popular as it was to become in succeeding centuries. Several occur in the Middlesex roll already mentioned, while the levy of Gosetrow hundred, Sussex, in 1339 saw two complete vintaines of billmen, although such a large quantity is exceptional¹. This particular roll also contained a large number of men armed with pykesteves, although the pike, yet another variation of staff-weapon, was not a very common arm of fourteenth-century English local levies. Apart from the poleaxe, other variations of axe were also used by the levies. Among the most frequent to occur are the Irish axe or spartha, with which several of the men of the Spelthorne levies were equipped, and the battleaxe (secura), four of which appeared in the Blything hundred muster².

Occasionally, weapons of a more sophisticated nature make their rare appearance. In 1346, one of the men arrayed in the Norfolk hundred of Sampford was armed with mace and chain (wyspilio)³. Seventeen of the men arrayed in Wangford hundred in the same year each carried a hachia cum pyk, and a large contingent of the Blything muster were armed with baculum cum pyk⁴. The wyax, a form of double-headed axe,

1. Dawson, Hist. of Hastings Castle, i.175-81.

2. P.R.O., C. 47/2/58/18.

3. P.R.O., C. 47/2/58/29.

4. P.R.O., C. 47/2/58/22 (Wangford); C. 47/2/39/15-18 (Blything).

also makes rare appearances¹. The 1339 Hastings muster refers to several men arrayed as wydem', who bore some kind of bladed weapon².

The appearance of sophisticated weapons is, however, rare. Arms such as the mace and chain, were the weapons of the professional soldier rather than of the local levies, whose prime role was that of auxiliaries. The low ratio of such arms in the musters suggests that they were no more than novelties. Possibly they had been obtained originally by soldiers who had served abroad, and then handed down in families, since under the statute, arms were strictly heritable. The most popular arms were of a more mundane nature, and in many cases, were simply agricultural tools and implements doubling as weapons. It had been noted above that staves were included in the class of lesser weapons. The staff (baculus) was very much in evidence among the arms of the local levies, as also were hatchets (hachia), which were by far the most numerous type of axe used. In the levy of Uxbridge hundred in c. 1336, five men were arrayed with knives and furca ferri or pitchforks³. The return of the Bridport muster of 1319 serves as a striking example of the high proportion of tools which served as weapons for the local levies. Apart from the poleaxes and a few swords, the majority of men arrayed carried forks, staves, or hatchets, with the addition of a knife for each⁴.

1. As, for example, in the 1355 muster of Conesford leet, Norwich (Hudson, 'Norwich Militia', pp.297-9).

2. Dawson, Hist. of Hastings Castle, i. 176-81. Dawson explains these men as 'whyniardemen' or swordsmen.

3. Greater London R.O., Acc. 1085, F.R.9, m. 2.

4. H.M.C. 6th Rept., p. 491.

It can thus be seen that the level of arming of the local defensive levies during the fourteenth century was generally of a low standard. In some cases, the standard was pitifully low. In addition to the poor quality of offensive arms, the almost total lack of body defences among the rank and file of the rural levies is also apparent.

The local officials who commanded the levies were usually better equipped than the men serving under them. There were, of course, instances where officers had men in their command who were better armed than themselves, or who had at least equivalent arms. Thus in John Gudstave's vintaine in the Ipswich muster of 1325, four men were armed identically to him, with aketon, bascinet, sword, and knife¹. At Dunwich in 1346, the vintemar, Thomas de Halerly, who was armed with lance, sword, and knife (the arms of those with less than 40s. a year), had under his command one man equipped with the requisite arms of the 100s. freeholder (pourpoint, chapel-de-fer, sword and knife), and another equipped with bow and arrows, sword and knife, the arms of the 40s. to 100s. landowner². These two instances referred, of course, to urban levies. Similar anomalies are rarely found in the musters of rural levies.

The most usual accoutrement of the vintemars in rural districts seemsto have been the lance, sword, and knife. In the Lose hundred muster, the Middlesex rolls, and in many of the rolls from Yorkshire and East Anglia, the vintemars were thus armed. Such an arms rating would place them in the lowest social bracket. Occasionally, vintemars'

1. P.R.O., C. 47/2/23/42.

2. P.R.O., C. 47/2/58/23-4.

lances displayed a pennon (pencellus) as an additional badge of rank¹. Vintenars were also frequently equipped with horns². There indeed appears to have been a certain amount of standardization in the arms of such officials.

The equipment of the other officers concerned with the array was not so standardized. Where one would expect to find the higher officials equipped with arms of better quality, this was often not the case. The two sub-constables of vills in the Spelthorne muster were armed with sword and knife only, while the constables of the hundred were armed in the same fashion as the vintenars, with lance, sword, and knife. In this case, the sub-constables were bearing the same arms as many of the rank and file.

It was a general practice for the centenars to be better armed than the vintenars, and many were equipped with body armour. The centenar of Framlingham in 1326 was armed with aketon, sword, and knife³. The centenar of the South Elmham detachment in the hundred of Wangford in 1346 was equipped with 'aketon, haubion, bacynet, espe et cultell'⁴. Such arms would place them in the £10 or twenty marks group. Of the two centenars named in the Dunwich roll of the same year, one was armed with 'pourpoint, bacinettum, lancia, gladius et cultellus', and the other with a chapel-de-fer and a cuirass of plate⁵.

1. E.g., Greater London R.O., Acc. 1085, F.P. 9, mm.3-5; P.R.O., C. 47/2/58/22.

2. E.g., Greater London R.O., Acc. 1085, F.P. 9.

3. Parl. Writs, II. ii. 744.

4. P.R.O., C. 47/2/58/22.

5. P.R.O., C. 47/2/58/23-4.

Such was the diversification of standards of arming among the local officers of the levies that it is difficult to generalize and to say that they were selected from any particular class of society. The hundred constables in the Middlesex roll, equipped as 40s. landowners, were poorly armed compared to the constables of the vill of Dunwich, one of whom had 'aketon, chapell de fer, lancia, gladius et cultellum', and the other, 'pourpointe, lancia, gladius et cultellum, et bacinettum'¹. The borough constables of Ipswich were arrayed with defensive armour comprising aketon, haubergeon, bascinet and iron gloves, together with sword, knife, lance and horse².

The differences in the standards of arming are nowhere so clearly marked as in the comparison between musters made in rural districts and those made in towns. In general, a far higher level of organization and a far superior standard of arming is to be seen with the town levies. Unfortunately, the scope of any inquiry is limited by a shortage of documentary evidence, although by coincidence, the majority of documents extant are concerned with musters held in East Anglian towns. It may thus well be that the picture drawn is relevant only to conditions as they were in East Anglia. The difference in arms is noticeable from the officers down to the rank and file, and the most marked aspect is the widespread use of body armour by the urban levies.

Although a period of twenty years separates the muster roll of Dunwich from that of Ipswich, there is barely any difference between

1. Ibid. These were respectively the arms of the £10 or twenty marks class and the 100s. class.

2. These were precisely the arms prescribed for hobelars in a royal writ of March 1335 (Rot. Scot., i. 328-9).

the arms of the personnel of the lowest ranks. At Ipswich, the majority of men were each armed with knives and one of the following: sword, gisarme, staff, or bow and arrows¹. Of the fourteen bowmen named, only two carried in addition a sword and a knife. Body armour, even by this comparatively early date, had penetrated to the lowest ranks, to a degree not encountered in any of the rural musters mentioned above. In the first vintaine appears one man armed with aketon, gisarme, and knife, and another with aketon, sword and knife. Three men in the second vintaine wore aketons. The Dunwich roll reveals a similar amount of defensive armour. Several of the men wore bascinets, and pourpoints and chapels-de-fer were in evidence. One man wore pourpoint, chapel-de-fer, cuirass of plate, and carried sword and knife².

But nowhere is the higher degree of arming in the boroughs so heavily underlined than in the extant muster rolls of the city of Norwich. The view of arms of the leet of Mancroft, for example, which was made between 1355 and 1370, revealed thirty men 'fully armed' with 'pourpoint, brac', pisan, bacinet cum aventail, waumbras, rerebras, cuter, cerot' ferri, tunica armatorum rubrica, gladius et cultellus'. In addition, there were fifty-seven men arrayed as archers (of which only one had bow and arrows, sword and knife, the rest having bows and arrows only), and a further ninety men without armour, who bore lesser arms³. The higher level

1. See Appendix 5b.

2. See Appendix 5c.

3. Hudson, 'Norwich Militia', pp.302-4.

of arming at Norwich than in country districts is further emphasised by the presence of several gunners in the Mancroft muster and by the provision of some sort of uniform in the tunics worn by several members of the city levies¹.

The leaders of the Norwich levies were extremely well armed. The eleven vintenars of the Mancroft leet were all armed in the same fashion with 'pourpoint, bracia, pisan plate, bacinet cum aventail, cerot' de ferro, tunica armatorum rubrica, cum pensel, gladius et cultellus'. The centenars were even more heavily equipped with 'pourpoint, bracia, pauncede mayle, pisan plate, bacinet cum aventail, waunbras et rerebras, cuters de fer, tunic armatorum rubrica, gladius et cultellus, hasta cum uno baner'. Thus the general levels of arming in Norwich were high, indeed, of a far higher standard than those of levies made in rural areas. Evidently the greater wealth of a mercantile city such as Norwich was reflected in the arms of its inhabitants who were liable for military service.

Never the less, one must bear in mind that the standards of arming, even in towns such as Norwich and Ipswich, were comparatively low. The requirement for what contemporaries regarded as the highest class of fighting man, the knight, was £40 in lands a year. The highest category provided for by the statute of Winchester was the £15 landholder, although in the 1330s and 1340s the obligation had been extended to the intermediate classes between the holders of

1. It appears that in this instance the tunics of the Norwich levies were red (rubrica). Other sources reveal that the colours of the city were red and white.

£15 and £40. In 1346, for example, those with £25 were expected to provide a man-at-arms: from the evidence of their arms, the centenars of the Norwich musters would have fallen into this category¹.

It was organized into *centaines* and *vintaines* within each hundred under the control of local commanders, and armed in the fashions described above that the local levies prepared themselves to meet the onslaughts of attackers. How far could such troops hope to be successful in repelling enemy attacks? It is clear that the standards of arming, and, one presumes, the efficiency of the levies varied from place to place. Often, as in the wealthier towns, arming levels were quite high. In many rural districts, however, the ill-armed levies, equipped for the large part with domestic and agricultural implements, were little more than a rabble. Indeed, the French described the defenders of Winchelsea in 1360 as '*une tourbe d'Angloiz qui estoient là rangéz pour garder Vincelze*'². In certain cases the defenders could only hope for strength in numbers, since the low quality of their arms would be no match for the well-armed French and Castilian raiders³.

The successes of the raiders on many occasions, particularly in the late 1330s and in the 1370s and 1380s, certainly reflect the weaknesses of the defenders. In 1338 and 1339, for example, the failure of the local levies to properly defend parts of the coast led to the burning of Southampton and '*alia loca maritima minus bene*

1. C.P.R., 1343-5, pp.427-8.

2. Chron. des Quatre Premiers Valois, pp. 112.

3. See Table I and also frontispiece where all the invaders are armed as knights while some of the defenders wear head protections only.

munita¹. In 1377, the French were able to land a force in the Isle of Wight 'quia parvam resistantiam habuerunt'². When Pero Niño's force of galleys sacked St. Ives in 1405, the defenders only retaliated as the enemy force withdrew: too late to be of any effect, although 'if the English had been gathered together at the first in as great numbers as they were then, the descent on the shore would have been very perilous'. The defenders of Portland similarly were 'all ill-armed and few in number and soon took to flight'³. The inadequacies of the defensive forces to protect the coast are significantly reflected in the number of occasions, particularly during the latter part of the war, on which the attacking forces were bought off with ransom money. The defenders of the Isle of Wight in 1377 were compelled to pay 1000 marks for the withdrawal of the French, while in 1385, Studland and Swanage in Dorset were among a number of coastal places which were licensed to pay ransom to the enemy if circumstances warranted it without fear of future impeachment⁴.

On the other hand, on many occasions the attackers were repulsed. In 1339, for example, the Genoese who descended on Plymouth were driven off by the defenders, while Winchelsea was saved

1. Baker, p.63; Chron. Ang., p.5; Knighton, ii. 7; Murimuth, p. 87; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i.221; Walsingham, Ypod. Neust., p. 275.

2. Chron. Ang., p. 166; Hist. Vita Ricardi II, p.2; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 340-1.

3. The Unconquered Knight. A Chronicle of the Deeds of Don Pero Niño, Count of Buelna, ed. and trans. J. Evans (London, 1928), pp.115-16, 119-

4. Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i.340-1; Ypod. Neust., p.327 (1377); C.P.R., 1381-5, p.554 (1385).

in 1377 by local forces under the command of the abbot of Battle¹. There are similarly many recorded instances of hostile fleets turning away from coastal places having been deterred from attacking by the seeming strength of the defensive forces. In 1339, the Genoese fleet did not attack Southampton and the Isle of Wight because these places were 'bene munita'². When Pero Niño's fleet approached Dartmouth they declined to attack because they saw 'fair troops of soldiers and archers coming up on all sides to defend the shore'³.

From the evidence available, it appears that the efficiency of the defensive forces varied from time to time and from place to place. The accounts of the chroniclers show that a French naval expedition against England could meet with success at some places, failure at others. The events of 1339 and 1377, and the cruise of Don Pero Niño show how the fortunes of an attacking fleet were liable to fluctuate. The success or failure of a raid seems to have depended upon the number of defenders which the attackers encountered. At the places where the raiders were repelled or decided not to attack, the decisive factor seems to have been that they were outnumbered by the defensive forces. Wherever they were met with numerous opposition, the raiders, if they decided to attack, usually became involved in heavy fighting. This was the case in Guernsey in 1372 and at Winchelsea and Lewes in 1377⁴. Where the local defenders were few in

1. Baker, p. 64 (1339); Hist. Vita Ricardi II, p. 2; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 341-2.

2. Baker, p. 63; Murimuth, p. 89.

3. The Unconquered Knight, p. 117.

4. Chron. des Quatre Premiers Valois, pp. 230-1 (1372); Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 341-2 (1377).

number, the enemy could carry out material damage with ease¹.

With a small, fast-roving fleet of galleys and expanses of sea to hide in, the advantage in the hit-and-run naval war always lay with the attackers. Such an attacking force, however, had one major disadvantage. In a fleet of ships, only a certain amount of fighting men could be carried. These troops were usually well equipped and would be more than a match for small bodies of ill-armed defenders. But if such a force could be pinpointed once it had landed, and sufficient defensive forces concentrated in that region, then the advantages lay with the defenders. The major problem for the defenders was to be able to foresee where the enemy would attack, and to muster the requisite numbers of troops in that area to repel them. Gutierre Diez de Games significantly ascribes Pero Niño's comparative success at Poole to the fact that the English king had taken many men from the area to fight in the wars in Wales². The frequent royal writs forbidding persons to leave the maritime lands in times of danger clearly were directed with the aim of maintaining as much manpower as possible to counter attacks.

One must not underestimate the difficulty for the defenders in ensuring that they had enough men in the right place at the right time. This was one of the principal problems of defence. Defensive forces, properly deployed, would act as a deterrent to an enemy hit-and-run raider who would wish to conserve limited resources of men for attacks on vulnerable targets. But if a large scale invasion attempt as opposed to mere raiding were made, the limitations of the local

1. Chron. Ang., p. 167 states that Hastings was 'pene vacuum'.

2. The Unconquered Knight, p. 128.

defensive levies would be even more apparent. Indeed, by the 1380s there is evidence that the crown sought to strengthen the local levies of the coastal shires on occasions when danger was imminent. In 1386, for instance, large numbers of archers were raised in many English shires, in addition to the local defensive arrays, and were sent south to join the king's army which intended to repel Charles VI's invasion force¹. There are also examples from this decade of indentured retinues being occasionally used to guard stretches of coastline². It was for the same reason of the unreliability of the local levies as a defensive force that the defence of important places such as coastal towns was usually entrusted to indentured retinues.

Thus although the levies of the shires were the main source from which English kings drew men for the defence of the realm, it is clear that this defensive force had many shortcomings. The low standards of arming undoubtedly contributed to this, although as the century wore on it appears that there was a gradual improvement in such standards³. But the greatest shortcoming was the difficulty of mobilizing such a force and enabling it to be in the right place with sufficient strength of numbers to counter an attack. Despite such failings, it is clear that on many occasions the local defensive forces provided a successful deterrent.

1. C.P.R., 1385-9, pp.217-18, 242, 321; C.C.R., 1385-9, pp. 173, 191, etc.

2. E.g., P.R.O., E. 101/531/40; E. 403/508, m. 4.

3. There was certainly an improvement by the fifteenth century. Compare the musters held at Bridport, Dorset in 1319 and September 1457 (H.M.C. 6th Rept., p. 493) and also those held in the city of Norwich in the second half of the fourteenth century (Hudson, 'Norwich Militia', pp. 295-316) with that held in the city in October 1457 (W. Hudson, Selected Records of the City of Norwich (Norwich, 1906), pp. 404-13).

CHAPTER SEVEN

OTHER OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN DEFENCE

Although the organization of defence, particularly in the coastal shires, was in the hands of royal defensive commissioners and their subordinates, numerous other officials were involved in matters of defence from time to time. But whereas for the keepers of the maritime lands and the arrayers military affairs were their chief raison d'être, for a host of officials, including the sheriff of the shire, bailiffs of towns, and constables of castles, defensive matters played only a part, and often a small part, of their wider duties. The efforts of such officials were, none the less, crucial for the defence of the realm.

The role of the sheriff in matters of defence was wide-ranging and very important. The sheriff had been involved in the defence of the shire even in pre-Conquest days, and although from the twelfth century onwards there had been erosion of his powers in this field as new defensive officials emerged, in the fourteenth century he none the less retained a great deal of authority and responsibility in matters of defence. He was, for instance, expected to work in close conjunction with the arrayers and keepers of the maritime lands and other officials for the defence of his shire. The close relationship between the sheriff

and other local officials in this respect was strengthened towards the end of the period by the inclusion of the sheriff ex officio in the defensive commissions of array or commissions de custodienda terre maritime¹. Indeed, on occasions the sheriff received explicit instructions from the crown to personally array men on his own behalf, usually for specified purposes. In February 1360, for instance, the sheriff of Wiltshire was ordered to array men for the defence of the castles of Old Sarum and Marlborough, while in June 1383, the sheriffs of Hampshire and Wiltshire were instructed, on pain of forfeit, to array men in their counties and to take them to Southampton without delay for the defence of the town against an imminent enemy attack².

Akin to the arraying of fighting men were the powers possessed by the sheriff in arresting workmen to perform tasks for the defence of the coasts. Frequently the sheriffs were ordered to carry out repairs to coastal towns and castles and to arrest workmen and supplies for such tasks³. The sheriff also often had instructions to arrest seamen. Thus in February 1356, the sheriff of Hampshire arrested seamen and archers for the passage of springalds from the Isle of Wight to Calais⁴.

The sheriff, too, was frequently responsible for the provision of arms, and victuals, and other supplies for the forces serving in defence. Supplying victuals for the garrisons of fortresses within his bailiwick was often a normal task of the sheriff in peace time. In times of danger,

1. See Ch. V, p. 126.

2. C.C.R., 1360-4, p. 9; C.C.R., 1381-5, p. 314.

3. E.g., P.R.O., E. 364/4, m. 3; C.C.R., 1339-41, p. 411.

4. P.R.O., C. 76/34, m. 18.

the responsibility for so doing became even more crucial. The records of Chancery and the Exchequer abound with references to the provision of victuals and supplies by the sheriffs to fortresses within their counties. In 1352, for example, the sheriff of Hampshire was ordered to provide for the better defence of Carisbrooke castle 100 quarters of wheat, sixty quarters of malt, eight quarters of fish, twenty quarters of beans, fifty bacones, twenty cart-loads of iron, sixty quarters of oats, and sixty quarters of hempen rope, and horse fodder in sufficient quantity¹. In 1345, the sheriff of Surrey and Sussex accounted at the Exchequer for supplies and victuals delivered to Pevensey castle for its defence². On numerous occasions, the sheriffs were ordered to purvey bows and arrows and other arms both for overseas campaigns and for national defence³.

The sheriff possessed a host of other duties concerned with defence and national security. He was frequently commanded to seize bullion, arms and other items illegally exported from the realm⁴. He was usually responsible for the arrest of suspected aliens and for the prevention of such persons from leaving the realm⁵.

But the most important role played by the sheriff in matters of defence was the support which he gave to the royal defensive commissioners, and in the way in which he functioned as the mouthpiece of the crown. It was he who usually made proclamations concerning intendance of the populace to the keepers of the maritime lands and

1. P.R.O., C. 76/30, m. 12.

2. P.R.O., E. 358/3, m. 11^v.

3. See Hewitt, Organization of War under Edward III, pp. 63-73.

4. E.g., Foedera, II. ii. 1029.

5. E.g., ibid., 1190; C.C.R., 1381-5, p. 77.

arrayers, and he had powers to enforce such obedience by arrest and imprisonment of rebellious persons or by distrainments upon their lands and chattels. The close supportive role played by the sheriff in this respect was emphasised by the fact that whenever commissions de custodienda terre maritime or of array were issued, they were usually accompanied by writs to the sheriff ordering him to be intendant and give aid to the keepers of the maritime lands or the arrayers¹.

The proclamations made by the sheriff were important in matters of defence. It was through the medium of the sheriffs' proclamations that the crown made the populace aware of their defensive obligations. Frequently, the sheriffs were ordered to proclaim 'in singulis feriis, mercatis, hundredis, burgis, villis mercatoriis, et aliis locis in balliva tua' that all with lands in the coastal shires, and who were not resident, should return there 'super defensionem terre maritime'. The crown issued such instructions on many occasions when danger threatened². Public proclamations were also the means of informing those who had fled the maritime lands through fear to return there. Thus in February 1340, the sheriff of Hampshire was ordered to proclaim that all persons owning property in Southampton should remain there with their possessions for the defence of the town, and that all who had already left were to return to the town without excuse within six days of the feast of the Decollation of St. John the Baptist on pain of forfeit of their lands and goods³. Often, as in Hampshire in July 1339, the sheriff

1. E.g., P.R.O., C. 61/50, m. 10.

2. E.g., P.R.O., C. 47/2/45/29; C. 76/15, mm. 7^v, 17; C. 76/16, m. 26.

3. P.R.O., C. 76/15, m. 31^v. The feast falls on 29 August.

was given powers to compel all such persons who had left the county to return there and remain in defence¹. The writs addressed to the sheriffs of the south-coast counties on 12 November 1370 clearly show the extent of the sheriffs' involvement in such a role. The sheriffs were ordered to proclaim that all persons having lands in the coastal counties and not dwelling there, and who were not continually remaining in their lands in any of the maritime counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire, Kent, Somerset or Sussex, should withdraw to their lands in the specified coastal county, where they were to array and organize their tenants. The sheriffs were to compel all men to comply by means of distraint upon their goods and chattels, or, as the extreme measure, by seizure of their lands. All men were to be present in their lands with their households for coastal defence by the Octave of Purification (9 February 1371) at the latest. In the meantime, each sheriff was to inquire into the names of all men holding lands in his county who were absentees, and was to certify to Chancery by the same date the names of such absentees, and the quantity and value of their lands².

It was also through proclamations made by the sheriff that the local populaces learned of royal warnings of impending enemy attack, of the ending of a truce, or declarations of royal policy regarding the war. Thus in July 1341, the sheriff of each coastal shire from Cornwall to Northumberland was ordered to publicly proclaim the forthcoming end of the truce with France, to inform the populace that the French were preparing a 'magnam flotam galearum', and to announce that all fencible men were to be arrayed within the maritime lands if the

1. P.R.O., C. 76/14, m. 5.

2. C.C.R., 1369-74, pp. 202-3.

French fleet attacked the coast¹.

The defensive tasks carried out by the sheriff in the shire were frequently executed within boroughs and towns by their own civic officials. The well-known writ of May 1242 had placed cities and towns under the regular control of mayors, reeves and bailiffs², and these officials in the fourteenth century had an important role to play in local defence. They made proclamations of various sorts concerning defence, they undertook the upkeep of their fortifications, they often arrested goods, men, supplies or ships, seized bullion, and sought out spies. They also performed numerous other defensive duties.

The proclamations which they made were similar to those made by the sheriffs. In 1369, for example, the civic officials of Shrewsbury, Southampton and Hereford were instructed to proclaim that no one was to leave these towns, and they had powers to prevent persons from leaving³. In November 1369, the officials of forty-four towns were to proclaim that no arms were to be taken out of the country, and were empowered to prevent such exports⁴. The civic officials also played important roles in the fortifying of their towns, frequently receiving royal instructions to do so. Thus in January 1370, the bailiffs of Bristol and Oxford were empowered to survey defects in their defences, to arrest workmen and materials to enable repairs to be carried out,

1. P.R.O., C. 76/16, m. 20.

2. Stubbs, Select Charters, pp. 363-4; C.R., 1237-42, pp. 482-3; Foedera, I. i. 204.

3. C.C.R., 1369-74, pp. 20, 23, 28.

4. Ibid., pp. 114-15.

and to compel the inhabitants to contribute to the cost of such repairs in relation to their means¹. Similar commissions were issued to the officials of Bath, Chichester, Exeter, Hull and a number of other towns in 1377². The civic officials also had control over the disbursements of moneys raised by grants of murage for the municipal fortifications.

Often, the civic officials were granted the powers of making arrays within their own borough, a privilege which was jealously guarded. In February 1339, for example, the civic officials of thirty-six cities and towns were ordered to array specified numbers of men for the defence of the realm³. It made sense for the levies of towns to be arrayed as single units, since the standards of arming in towns were generally higher than in rural districts. Indeed, levies from the towns were often raised for service overseas or in Scotland, and especially at sea. The London levies, in particular, were increasingly employed by the crown in a multitude of roles, on each occasion receiving the royal assurance that by serving they were not setting a precedent injurious to their jealously-guarded prerogatives⁴. Municipal levies, with their superior arms, were a more 'professional' fighting force, and since they had a common bond in coming from the same place, they were a far tighter knit, and therefore more versatile unit than

1. C.P.R., 1370-4, pp. 39-40.

2. C.P.R., 1377-81, pp. 3 (Exeter), 18, 58 (Hull), 21 (Bath), 72 (Chichester).

3. P.R.O., C. 76/14, m. 14.

4. E.g., Memorials of London and London Life, ed. Riley, pp. 114, 187-90; Cal. Letter Book G, pp. 242-3, 294-5, etc.

were their counterparts in the rural districts.

However, since towns on the coast were natural targets for hit and run raiders, and since it was in towns that the English had the most to lose in the event of a successful attack, the right of arraying the inhabitants of a town for its self-defence was an extremely important function, and one which was aimed at ensuring that there was a reasonably adequate number of defenders in the town. Thus, whereas in April 1385 commissions of array were issued for all English counties, there were also separate commissions issued for the defence of a number of important coastal towns. At Canterbury the bailiffs were ordered to array all fencible laymen of the city against hostile invasion, to keep them in readiness to resist attacks, ensuring that the walls were properly manned, and to provide guns and engines for the better defence of the city and its suburbs. In Gloucester, Lynn, and Norwich slightly less detailed commissions of array were issued to the bailiffs¹. Occasionally the crown stressed the necessity of keeping arrays made in towns separate from those made by the commissioners of array in the shire. Thus, when the bailiffs of Hereford were ordered in 1369 to array the inhabitants of the town for its defence against possible enemy action from Wales, the commissioners of array in Herefordshire received explicit instructions not to meddle in the making of the array in the town².

1. C.P.R., 1381-5, pp. 589-91 (counties), 597 (Canterbury), 598 (Gloucester, Lynn, Norwich). See also Appendix 9.

2. C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 42.

Such was the importance of towns and their vulnerability to attacks that in certain places, keepers or constables who had a large amount of powers in matters of defence were appointed. The duties of the keepers of towns, and of constables of royal coastal castles, varied from place to place, making generalizations difficult. There were, however, certain duties which were common to all such keepers. The keepers played an important role in the every day administration of their charge: they dispensed justice, collected rents and fees due, and often accounted at the Exchequer¹. But the military duties of the keepers of towns and castles on the coast were far-reaching.

Because of the potential as targets for enemy attacks and because of the need for strong bulwarks against such attacks, great emphasis was placed upon the defence of coastal towns and fortresses. Often, the defensive interests of coastal towns took precedence over the needs of high-ranking royal officials. For example, May 1336, the admiral of the North was forbidden to impress men for service at sea within the city of Norwich, since it lay within the maritime lands². Also, whenever extreme danger threatened, the defenders of coastal towns were often reinforced by contract troops or shire levies from inland counties³.

1. Cam, 'Shire Officials: Constables, Coroners and Bailiffs', pp. 165-6.

2. Rot. Scot., I. 419. Clearly, precedence depended on prevailing circumstances. If a naval expedition had priority, then the keepers of the maritime lands and their colleagues would have to be obedient to the admiral. For instance, in 1339, the keepers of the maritime lands in Essex, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk were ordered not to obstruct Robert de Morle, the admiral of the north, who was arresting men for the fleet (P.R.O., C. 76/14, m. 13).

3. See Ch. IV, p.88.

In important towns which were situated in vulnerable or strategically important positions, keepers with responsibility for defence were usually appointed. This was the case on the northern border, at Berwick and Carlisle, and with the English held 'barbicans' in France¹. In the coastal region, the chief towns which fell into this category were Dover, Portsmouth and Southampton, while the threats to Yarmouth in 1371 prompted the appointment of a royal keeper². In addition to their obvious military functions, the keepers of towns possessed routine administrative duties, which have been discussed by other writers³.

Fairly representative of the functions and duties of royal keepers of towns are those embodied in the appointment of Almaric de St. Amand as keeper of Southampton in 1369. On 15 August, Edward III appointed Almaric as keeper and captain of the town at pleasure, with full powers to chastise and do justice among all troops serving in the town and its suburbs, to array the men of the town for its defence against the French, to do all other things necessary for the safeguard and good

1. See Reid, 'The Office of the Warden of the Marches', 479-96.

2. P.R.O., C. 76/54, m, 8. Because of the French threat, Henry Rose was appointed as keeper and captain with powers of array. On the strategic importance of Yarmouth, see W. G. Hoskins, Fieldwork in Local History (London, 1967), pp. 26-7.

3. E.g., T. F. Tout, Chapters in Medieval Administrative History, (6 vols., Manchester 1920-33), iii. 21 ff.; W. O. Ault, 'Manors and Temporalities', The English Government at Work, ed. Willard and Morris, iii. 13, 14, 29.

rule of the town, and to arrest and imprison all contrariants. The sheriff, other local officials, and all men in the county of Hampshire were to be intendant to him. Similar commissions were given to Warin de l'Isle, as keeper and captain of Portsmouth, and to Roger de Elmrugge, keeper and captain of the town and castle of Portchester¹.

In their main tenor, these commissions differed very little from that issued in July 1346 appointing the abbot of Hyde, John Lenglish, and John de Bokeland as keepers of Southampton, or that of June 1377, which appointed John d'Arundel as keeper². It is interesting to note that each of these commissions stated that all persons in the county, including the sheriff, were to obey the directions of the keepers. This clearly emphasized the importance with which the defence of the town was regarded. The commission of 1346 was even more explicit: by its terms, the keepers of the maritime lands in the county were instructed to organize the troops under their command and to send them to Southampton whenever its keepers directed. Such subordination of the royal defensive commissioners in the county to the will of the keepers of towns was a very common occurrence in times of danger, and stressed the importance with which the defence of towns was viewed. The commission of Richard Talbot as 'superiorem custodem ville nostre Suthamptonie' in February 1340, contained similar instructions, and

1. C.P.R., 1367-70, p. 304. Two copies of the original patent are to be found in Guildford Muniment Room, Losely MS. 337/80/a, b. I was allowed to consult these documents by kind permission of Mr. J. R. More-Molyneux of Loseley Park.

2. P.R.O., C. 76/23, mm. 16, 26; Foedera, III. i. 86; C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 4.

further gave the keeper power to superintend the men-at-arms who had been raised in the inland counties of Berkshire and Wiltshire for the defence of Southampton¹. The power of control over arrays made in inland counties had also been given to the Southampton keepers, Stephen de Bitterle and William de Weston in November 1339, when, also, the keepers of the maritime lands and arrayers had been ordered to be intendant to them and to give aid².

The keepers of towns usually indented to serve with specified numbers and types of troops in their retinue at the usual rates of pay for soldiers, and normally for a specified period. Thus in the indenture made on 13 July 1339 with the Black Prince, who was acting as keeper of the realm, Thomas de Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, agreed to serve with 100 men-at-arms and 120 archers for a quarter of a year from 26 July 'sour lagarde de la ville de Suthamptonie'³. The compotus of Warin de l'Isle as keeper of Portsmouth for the period from 13 August to 28 October 1369 reveals that £259 17s. 6d. was the sum of wages owed to Warin, the keeper, who received the standard banneret's rate of 4s. a day, and to fifteen knights at 2s. a day, twenty-seven esquires at 12d. a day, and to fifty-three archers at 6d. a day⁴.

1. P.R.O., C. 76/15, m. 22.

2. P.R.O., C. 76/14, m. 1.

3. Southampton R.O., S.C. 13/3/2. See Appendix 2. See also S.C. 13/3/1 for the compotus of Thomas de Beauchamp from 25 July to 25 August in the defence of the town, and S.C. 13/3/3 for the nominal roll of his retinue.

4. P.R.O., E. 364/5, m. 29; E. 364/6, m. 5. He in fact received only £250 from the Exchequer for this period of seventy-seven days.

As well as command of their retinues, the keepers also had the powers outlined above to array extra men for the defence of the town and also to take charge of the inhabitants of the town. In times of danger, the garrisons of the town were usually reinforced. Often, the crown would attend to this. On 26 August 1369, for instance, Warin de l'Isle's garrison at Portsmouth was swelled by the arrival of ninety-five armed men and 200 horse archers who had been raised by the king's command of 13 August in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, and sent 'cum omnia festinacione ... moratura super salva custodia ville predicte'¹. Twenty-five armed men and twenty-five archers were also sent to the town from Northamptonshire². On other occasions the keepers were themselves ordered to array extra men. In July 1377, for instance, John d'Arundel, the keeper of Southampton, was authorized to take 100 men-at-arms and 100 archers for the defence of the town wherever he could find them, provided that they were not engaged in the king's service or in the retinues of other lords³.

Powers of arrest were often used by the keepers as a means of obtaining a labour force for the repair and construction of fortifications. By their commissions of appointment, keepers were frequently enjoined to do 'all else necessary for the defence of the town', and this clause embraced the maintenance of fortifications. On times, however, the commissions contained more explicit instructions for the upkeep of

1. P.R.O., E. 364/3, m. 4^v.

2. P.R.O., E. 364/3, m. 5^v.

3. C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 12.

the physical defences of a town. The patent appointing Henry Peverell as keeper of Southampton in 1360 stated that he was to supervise ditches, repair defects to the fabric of the defences, and to cut back trees from the walls. In these tasks, the townsfolk were to be intendant to him and to give all necessary aid¹. A letter from the keeper to the king in April of that year reported on the works which had been carried out. It also indicated that the opposition of the townsfolk to the measures taken for improving the defences was so great that the keeper was contemplating resignation². Evidently public cooperation in defensive matters was not always forthcoming, thus the keepers were frequently obliged to arrest workmen to carry out important works of this nature. When the defences of Southampton were to be strengthened in 1378, the keeper, John d'Arundel, was instructed to arrest carpenters, masons, and labourers for the works³.

The keepers of towns were not only responsible for the control of the garrison and population of their charge, but they also had control of all arms and artillery in their town, as well as of all victuals. When a new keeper was appointed, his predecessor yielded up possession of such items. Thus, in July 1339, Thomas de Beauchamp took delivery by indenture of all arms stored in Southampton, while in the following year, the incoming keeper, Richard Talbot, received all 'springaldos, armas, arbalistas, lanceas, targeas, et alias garnisturas' from the

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1. Foedera, III. i. 481.
 2. C.I.M., 1348-77, pp. 154-5.
 3. C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 7.

outgoing keeper¹. Keepers often purveyed victuals and supplies of war for their garrisons, although this was subject to the limitations of Magna Carta and the Statute of Westminster².

As local defensive officials with responsibility for the safety of their town and often the surrounding area, the keepers frequently carried out numerous other functions. They sometimes were instructed by the crown to make proclamations on matters regarding defence. For example, in August 1340, two of the keepers of Southampton were ordered to proclaim that all persons having possessions in the town were to return there before the enemy attacked, and all who remained in the town were not to withdraw from it under pain of forfeit³. Frequently, as at Southampton in 1338, the keepers were ordered to arrest ships and seamen for defensive purposes⁴.

The keepers of coastal towns thus had an important role to play in matters of defence. The necessity for ensuring the safety of important coastal towns led to the appointment of these officials, whose authority exceeded that of royal commissioners involved in the garde de la mer in the coastal shires, although the keepers of towns and keepers of the maritime lands and arrayers operated in close conjunction with one another for the defence of the realm. The need for effective defence of coastal towns led, in some cases, to experimentation. In Southampton during the late 1330s and 1340s, it was usual for a number of keepers to be appointed for the defence of

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1. C.C.R., 1339-41 (Beauchamp); P.R.O., C. 76/15, m. 31 (Talbot).
 2. Stats. Realm, i. 96, 114.
 3. P.R.O., C. 76/15, m. 6^v.
 4. C.C.R., 1337-9, p. 560.

the town. Thus, in October 1338, John de Scures and Thomas Cerndry were named as keepers of the town; John de Bokelond and John de Palynton were keepers from November 1338 to February 1339; while the prior of the Hospital of St. John, Edmund de la Beche, Richard de Penle, and Stephen de Bitterle were keepers between April and June 1339¹. With the appointment of the abbot of Hyde, John Lenglissh, and John de Bokelond as keepers in 1346, the keeping of Southampton was combined with the safeguarding of the coast 'versus Novam Forestam'². From the 1360s onwards, however, it was usual to appoint only one captain or keeper of Southampton.

The keepers or constables of coastal castles also had a defensive role to play in times of emergency which was similar in many aspects to that of the keepers of towns. In times of danger, the role of the constables of castles combined many of the functions of other defensive officials. They frequently augmented the existing garrison by taking men from the locality. In June 1381, the king, hearing that the French were preparing to attack, ordered Robert Bardolf, the keeper of Portchester castle, to take men-at-arms and archers for the defence of the castle³. Frequently, the taking on of extra troops in times of danger was left to the discretion of the keeper. In June 1383, the same Robert Bardolf was ordered by writ of Privy Seal to retain twelve

1. C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 181 (Scures etc.); C.C.R., 1337-9, p. 606, C.C.R., 1339-41, p. 18 (Bokelond etc.); P.R.O., C. 76/14, m. 8, C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 275, C.C.R., 1339-41, pp. 121, 215, 230 (de la Beche etc.).

2. P.R.O., C. 76/23, m. 16; Foedera, III. i. 86.

3. C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 16.

armed men and ten archers in the garrison of Portchester for as long as the current danger should last, and if this number proved to be insufficient, he was empowered to arrest as many extra men as he thought necessary, for whom he would be paid at the Exchequer¹.

The powers of arraying the local inhabitants for defence were often included in the commission of appointment of the constables, although they often received separate commission from the crown to make local arrays whenever danger threatened. In 1386, John de St. Quentin, keeper of Scarborough castle, was commissioned to array the men of Scarborough for the defence of the castle and town against threatened invasion by the French². In the 1370s and 1380s, the constables of Queenborough castle were empowered to take men-at-arms and archers from the hundred of Milton and the Isle of Sheppey for the defence of the castle, while the keepers of Hadleigh, Pevensey, and many other coastal castles similarly took men from their localities for defence³. In many instances, the needs of the constables took precedence over those of the local arrayers or keepers of the maritime

1. P.R.O., E. 364/18, m. 1. In March 1385, the order was repeated for twelve armed men and ten archers 'ultra garnisturam quam ibidem habebat pro tempore quo necessitas exposteret' (E. 364/19, m. 3), and again in May 1386 by twelve armed men and eight archers (E. 364/20, m. 2). He was also allowed to take victuals. The size of the garrison of Portchester fluctuated throughout the period. Under Richard, earl of Arundel, the constable in the 1330s and 1340s, the usual garrison in war time was ten men-at-arms and forty archers (C.C.R., 1337-9, p. 564; C.C.R., 1339-41, p. 65; E. 403/307, m. 1). In the 1360s and 1370s, the garrison was regularly fifteen men-at-arms and eighteen archers in the war season and as low as two men-at-arms and eight archers in the winter season (E. 364/7, mm. 1^v, 39^v; E. 364/11, m. 5). The bare minimum complement was a porter, a groom, a watchman, and an artiller (C.P.R., 1374-7, p. 353).

2. C.P.R., 1385-9, p. 223.

3. C.P.R., 1377-81, pp. 2, 536 (Queenborough); *ibid.*, p. 2 (Hadleigh); C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 72 (Pevensey).

lands.

The jurisdiction of the constable could be extended in times of danger to a fairly extensive area surrounding his castle. The extension of the powers of the keepers of Southampton to the coastal area towards the New Forest has been noted above. The crown appears to have, on occasions, employed castellans as the local leaders of the defenders within the locality of their fortresses. In 1347, for instance, Ralph de Baggeleye, the constable of Corfe castle, was commissioned to defend the ports of Droukeseye, Kimmeridge, Shortmanspool, Swanage, and Worbarrow and other maritime places in the Isle of Purbeck. To carry out his charge, he was empowered to superintend the array, to combat the French should they land, to do all else reasonable for defence, and to arrest and punish delinquents. All inhabitants of Purbeck were to be intendant to him¹. It is evident that the crown was taking advantage of Corfe castle, as the defensive focal point of the region, to create a natural administrative district for defence, similar to the defence zones based around coastal towns which had been a prominent feature of the defensive preparations of 1295². Such a use of fortresses as the focal points of small defensive zones was apparent elsewhere, particularly in the Isle of Wight, where the keeper of the island frequently also held the post of constable of Carisbrooke castle³. This use was also apparent in 1386, when inhabitants of the regions lying within six miles of Dover castle, Rye, or Sandwich were ordered to repair to these places to swell the garrisons should the enemy

1. P.R.O., C. 76/24, m. 16.

2. A. Z. Freeman, 'A Moat Defensive', pp. 446-7.

3. See Ch. V.

attack¹.

Constables were often concerned in carrying out repairs to their fortresses, and frequently accounted at the Exchequer for works carried out on the king's behalf. Works carried out at Scarborough castle by the constable, Ingelram de Umfraville in 1377-8, for instance, amounted to £11 5s. 2d.². Works to the sum of £40 were carried out at Portchester castle in 1369³. In cases where such works were carried out by other persons, the constables were often required to testify to the satisfactory execution. Thus in 1346, the constable, John Haket testified to the completion of domestic and military works at Portchester castle, while in 1377, the constable of Corfe castle assigned a comptroller and supervisor to check on the works being carried out there by the mayor of Corfe⁴. Orders from the king to the constables concerning the repair of fortresses were almost always accompanied by instructions to arrest workmen and materials for the works⁵.

Often, the constables' actions involved the maintenance of general security. They could arrest men and ships of alien countries at the king's command, as in 1346, when the keeper of Corfe was ordered to take alien merchants into custody, or as in 1380, when the constable of Queenborough over-zealously arrested a ship of Sluys, which was,

1. C.P.R., 1385-9, p. 185.

2. P.R.O., E. 364/11, m. 8.

3. C.P.R., 1367-70, p. 221.

4. C.C.R., 1343-6, p. 632 (Portchester); P.R.O., E. 364/11, m. 3 (Corfe).

5. E.g., at Corfe: C.P.R., 1350-4, p. 82 (1351), C.P.R., 1364-7, p. 315 (1366), C.P.R., 1367-70, p. 101 (1368), C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 1 (1377); at Portchester: C.P.R., 1361-4, p. 141 (1362), C.P.R., 1367-70, p. 221 (1369), P.R.O., E. 364/21, m. 4 (1385); at Rochester: E. 364/2, m. 6 (1366-7, 1377-8), E. 364/3, m. 14 (1369), E. 364/6, m. 27^v (1370).

at that time, 'in the friendship' of the king¹. Often, the constables were to arrest deserters from the king's fleet or host, and they frequently acted as gaolers, holding in custody captured enemies and spies, as well as common criminals².

Constables of castles thus had wide powers in defensive matters, which often extended beyond the administration of the fortress in their charge. Occasionally, keepers could abuse the powers given to them. For example, Ralph de Baggeleye, the constable of Corfe castle was indicted before a commission of Oyer and Terminer in November 1361 on charges of having held local people captive in the castle until heavy ransoms were paid³. Such cases apart, it is clear that fortifications were an important aspect in matters of coastal defence, and that the men in charge of fortresses had an often crucial function to carry out in the defence of the realm.

Other officials from time to time were involved in local and national defence. The royal sergeants-at-arms, for example, were

1. C.C.R., 1346-9, p. 131; C.C.R., 1377-81, p. 483.

2. C.P.R., 1370-4, p. 240 (deserters); C.C.R., 1346-9, pp. 252, 536 (prisoners of war); C.C.R., 1374-7, pp. 315, 318, 439-40 (spies); C.C.R., 1381-5, p. 462 (counterfeiters). On the powers of imprisonment, see R. B. Pugh, Imprisonment in Medieval England (Cambridge, 1970), passim.

3. C.P.R., 1361-4, p. 142. The parallels between this incident and the methods of the Free Companies in France are all too apparent. Baggeleye appears to have used the castle as a base for ravaging the whole of the surrounding area. One of the charges levelled against him was that he had ambushed men of Wareham.

employed in a number of ways by the crown on defensive business. Most frequently used for arresting men and ships for naval purposes and occasionally carrying messages, they sometimes made arrays and conducted inquiries into defensive matters¹.

But there was one group of persons whose role as organizers and leaders of local forces has been largely overlooked. Persons holding lands in coastal counties were frequently commissioned by the king as keepers of the maritime lands or arrayers, in which capacity they acted officially in the defence of the realm. But there were many instances when such persons, although not recipients of a royal commission, were ordered, as part of their defensive obligations, to retire to their lands in the coastal shire for defence. Thus in 1347, persons with lands in the Isle of Wight were commanded to go there for their defence, while in 1383 and 1385 numerous commands to persons to go to their lands in maritime shires were issued². Very often such orders contained instructions for the landowners to array their tenants and to organize them for defence. Thus in July 1377 the abbot of Bury was commanded to draw without delay to Walton in Suffolk with his household troops and to stay there as long as necessary for defence as he and his predecessors used to do in time of war³. In May 1380, the abbot of Lettley in Hampshire was ordered to cast aside all excuses, and to scour and repair

1. E.g., P.R.O., E. 403/508, m. 1 (ships etc.); E. 403/468, m. 2 (messages); C. 81/1758/18, 41 (inquisitions); C.C.R., 1340-3, p. 12 (arrays); C. 76/64, m. 25 (supervising musters); E. 403/463, m. 4 (beacons).

2. Foedera, III. i. 104; C.C.R., 1381-5, pp. 278, 538, 539, 542.

3. C.C.R., 1377-81, p. 37.

the ditches and enclosure of the abbey, to array the monks, household and tenants with all speed, and to garrison the abbey with them to combat the French should they land¹. Numerous landowners were ordered to array their tenants for the defence of their coastal lands in August 1386². It is evident that the role of such persons as lords of the said lands made them the natural leaders of their tenants. The units of troops thus formed could be conveniently employed as ready-made forces for the defence of the estates from where they came, although such units with their lords ultimately came under the command of the keepers of the maritime lands or arrayers for the coastal county, and could, theoretically, have been stationed wherever the keepers directed.

Many of the landowners who received such orders were clergy such as the abbots of Bury and Lettley mentioned above. Clergy indeed played an active role in defensive matters. In cases such as those above, the crown made no differentiation between lay and clerical landlords, although a clause in a royal letter patent of 1384 referring to the alienation in mortmain of lands in Kent, suggested that clergy were not regarded as such good defenders as laymen³. Never the less, on occasions where the terms of normal commissions of array embraced the arraying of laymen only, the bishops were sometimes given the

1. Ibid., p. 311.

2. C.C.R., 1385-9, p. 253.

3. C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 367. The granting of certain lands in mortmain was said to have contributed 'to the great weakening of the defences of Kent'.

responsibility for arraying all clergy within their dioceses. This was the case, for instance, in May 1377, when the archbishops and bishops were ordered to make such arrays and to mobilize the clergy thus arrayed into thousands, centaines and vintaines to march with each bishop for the defence of the realm¹. Ecclesiastics were also used as the crown's mouthpiece through proclamations made from the pulpit².

Involvement in national defence and in the organization of the local forces for the garde de la mer was not simply the responsibility of the royal defensive commissioners as other writers have pointed out. Although the keepers of the maritime lands and the arrayers played the largest roles in the spheres of local defence, organization within the coastal shires was more complicated and more widely diversified than the principle of the bilateral system of defensive officials suggests. Indeed, the needs of and responsibility for safeguarding the coastal area touched upon a host of other officials whose combined functions in this direction were of crucial importance to the safety of the realm.

1. C.C.R., 1377-81, p. 88.

2. E.g., Foedera, III. i. 303.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BEACONS AND WARNING SYSTEMS

Although, during the fourteenth century, there was in existence machinery for protecting the realm when it was threatened, defenders were often ineffectual if an attack came without warning¹. Both Edward III and Richard II chose to keep themselves informed of the enemy's preparations by the employment of agents and other means more fully described in a later chapter². Although intelligence reports could be, and often were, defective, they did give some indication of the enemy's movements and preparations, if not of his precise intentions. Thus it was on relatively few occasions that the English central authorities were unaware of the general possibility of enemy attacks. But while authorities might be alive to potential dangers, it was often difficult to know where and when such attacks would come. It was thus essential for the authorities firstly to be able to place the defenders in the localities in a state of readiness against a possible threat, and, secondly, to quickly warn them in the event of

1. As, for example, at Winchelsea in 1360. See above, p. 27..

2. See Ch. XI

an attack taking place in their local area, so that steps could be taken to counter it.

Hewitt has mentioned the necessity of passing on the information received about impending attacks or invasion to the men of the county, and even more important, of alerting them in the case of an enemy's actual landing. The most usual method for setting the machinery in motion was by means of a writ from the central government to the local officers or magnates involved in the organization of defence in the coastal areas. Quite correctly, Hewitt noted that such warnings were of three kinds: 'the plain statement that the French (or the Scots) are preparing to invade England, the more precise declaration that the enemy is expected to land in this or that county, and the prediction that an attempt is not only imminent but will be accompanied, if the enemy lands, by terrible evils'¹. The contents of these writs, which usually include orders to array the men of the county in accordance with the Statutes of Winchester and Northampton, and to hold them in readiness to repel any enemy incursion which may arise, have been discussed elsewhere². This link in the defensive cycle served merely to alert the inhabitants and officials of the various maritime localities to the impending danger, so that, in the event of an attack, they should be prepared to counter it.

However, by sending out such writs, the king simply put the

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1. Hewitt, The Organization of War under Edward III, pp. 3-4.
 2. See Chs. V and VI.

defensive forces available to him on the alert. If an actual attack occurred, a system involving the use of fire-signals came into operation; firstly, to let those already waiting upon the defence of the sea-coasts know that the enemy had been sighted, and that an attack was imminent; secondly, in the event of an enemy's gaining a foothold on dry land (and, of course, if the Scots made incursions into English territory), the same fire-signals would then be used to inform the men of the inland shires that this had taken place, so that they might come to the relief of the stricken area; thirdly, the beacon would serve as a muster-point for the levies which it had alerted.

Frequently, royal writs to the keepers of the maritime lands, and to the sheriffs of counties both on the sea-coast and further inland, included instructions to set up fire-signals or beacons to warn the men of the county in the event of an emergency. In 1337, for instance, writs were sent to Bartholomew de l'Isle and his associates, 'custodibus terrae maritime in comitatu Suthantonie', and to their fellow keepers in Devon, and Somerset and Dorset, which included instructions to provide for 'communa signa, quae per ignem super montes et alio modo', to warn the inhabitants of the areas under their command of the arrival of the enemy¹. Similar orders were issued again in August 1338, when the sheriffs of all the English counties were instructed to erect the 'signum commune per ignem super montes, vel alio modo, in comitatu predicto, ubi et quotiens, ac prout opus facit, et melius videris expedire, et alias in casu consimili fieri consuevit, fieri faceres, omnibus praetermissis debitis temporibus praemuniri, ut dictorum

1. Foedera, II. ii. 996 (4 September 1337).

hostium malicia, si ad partes illas declinassent, per huiusmodi ignis illuminationem et praemunitioem per homines partium earundem potentius posset refrenari ... Tibi adhuc praecipimus, firmiter injungentes, quod statim visis praesentibus, huiusmodi signa communia per ignem, tam super montes longe a mari distantes, quam in aliis locis juxta costera maris ... fieri facias'.¹ Similar commissions appear with regularity in those years which contained enemy threats to England.

Three separate stages can be discerned in the English machinery of coastal defence:

1. The accumulation of information concerning the enemy's disposition and intentions by spies and other 'reliable sources', and the transmission of this intelligence to the king and Council.
2. The issue of royal writs to be sent to local officials charged with the burden of defence, instructing them to prepare the forces available to them to counter any possible attack.
3. In the event of an attack, the setting in motion of the above defensive forces by the use of warning devices.

It is the third of these stages which must now be considered.

The origins of the English beacon system are unfortunately obscured by the noticeable shortage of documentary evidence for the period prior to the early years of the fourteenth century. This dearth of evidence has been seen by some to suggest that the beacon system in England was either the product of the first few decades of the fourteenth century (from which period survive the earliest references in official sources to beacons), or that an already existing warning system, although in embryonic form, underwent reorganization at that time.

1. Ibid., p. 1055 (15 August 1338).

The subject of beacons is one which has been largely neglected by medieval historians, and the tendency to concentrate upon the system of the sixteenth century is a natural one, justified by the large amount of source material surviving from this latter period. For example, Hewitt writes that 'by long tradition, news of a hostile landing in England was to be spread over a wide area by means of a system of beacons on well-known lofty sites'¹. He does not, unfortunately, treat the subject to any further examination, and one is left to wonder what this tradition was based upon, and just how long it was. It is therefore necessary to first investigate the existence in England of the beacon prior to the fourteenth century.

The Beacon in England prior to the Fourteenth Century

The use of the fire-signal as a method of warning is of greatest antiquity, and was known to the classical world. Tacitus makes mention of both the Greeks and the Romans using them. There is some evidence that the beacon was known in England during the Anglo-Saxon period. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle refers to the 'here beacna' or army signal of the Danish host in 1006, but the entry implies that the word 'beacon' in this case was used in the sense of a portent of war, and therefore a thing to be avoided, rather than the meaning which it was to have in the fourteenth century and later². Other references to beacons during this period are

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1. Hewitt, The Organization of War under Edward III, p. 4.
 2. Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, ed. B. Thorpe (2 vols., R.S., 1861), i. 256-7; ii. 113 (translation). The etymological derivation of 'beacon' from the Anglo-Saxon is underlined by the reappearance of the form 'here beacna' as 'harynbeknes' in the fourteenth century (P.R.O., C.81/1758/3 and below, p.208). This account of the early history of the beacon is based chiefly on the works of Russell, White, and Wood cited below.

very few and far between. However, it has been noted that one of the duties of the 'cotsetlan' or cottager, who lived by the sea was to keep watch along the coast and out to sea, and to signal the approach of the enemy by lighting a fire on the nearest hill. There is no suggestion that the fire was to serve as a mustering-point for the forces thus alerted, as it was to be in the fourteenth century.

A contrasting viewpoint has been expressed by other historians, who support the theory that the Anglo-Saxons did not use the fire-signal, but preferred to develop a chain of messengers to pass on the warnings. The posts were established on what came to be known as 'watch and ward hills'. At a later date, beacons were erected on these hills, so the association of the two together dated from a later period¹.

From etymological evidence, it is apparent that the word 'beacon' is in fact, of Anglo-Saxon origin. This was recognized as early as the sixteenth century, when Lambarde, writing on the subject, stated that the term is derived from the Anglo-Saxon 'becnian', to call by sign or to beckon². This derivation was further substantiated by two writers of the following century. Coke, in the fourth part of his Institutes, said that the term was derived from the Anglo-Saxon 'beacon', 'speculum, unde speculantur adventus hostium', further adding that the word often had the same meaning as 'to beckon' in modern usage³. Camden added that 'this kind of watch-towers have the name of beacons, from the old word

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1. P. Russell, 'Fire Beacons in Devon', Rept. and Trans. Devon Assocn., lxxxvii (1955), 252-5. He does not give the reasons for his theory.
 2. W. Lambarde, Perambulation of Kent (London, 1576), p.66.
 3. Coke, Fourth Institutes, p. 148.

Beacnion, i.e., "to beckon"¹. When this quality of beckoning is sought for in Anglo-Saxon sources, it is not to be found. Instead, the beacon of this period seems to suggest either brightness or to transmit a warning. The second of these nuances has been encountered above in the reference to the burnings by the Danish army in the south of England.

In view of the evidence, however, it seems certain that the beacon was used as a warning sign in pre-Conquest England. The evidence is too strong to dismiss it. Fire-signals were, however, known in the British Isles from at least the twelfth century, since in 1136, the earl of Orkney used fire-signals to warn of the advent of Norse raiders².

The development of the beacon in the centuries following is lost from sight, owing to a complete absence of documentary evidence. One does not encounter further references to beacons until the third decade of the fourteenth century. The sudden appearance of beacons in official sources during the closing years of the reign of Edward II has been taken by some to be a case for placing the origins of the English beacon system in this first quarter of the fourteenth century.

The year 1324 has been noted as the first in which the authenticated appearance of the beacon has occurred in official records³. In this year, an inquisition was held on 6 August at Shidam^{bridge} or Shide Bridge in

1. W. Camden, Britannia, i. 219.

2. Icelandic Sagas. The Orkneyinga Saga, ed. G. Vigfusson, trans. G.W. Dasent. (4 vols., R.S., 1887-94), iii. 115.

3. Russell, 'Fire Beacons in Devon', p. 288; H.T. White, 'The Beacon System in Hampshire', Proc. Hants F.C., x (1930), 258; ———, 'The Beacon System in Kent', Arch. Cant., xlvi (1934), 78; R.J. Wood, 'The Beacons of the North of England' (M.Sc. (Econ), London, 1937), p.2.

the Isle of Wight. This enquiry listed thirty-one places in the island where fires and watches were held¹. A year later, in 1325, a commission was issued to Robert de Monte Alto and Thomas Bardolphe, appointing them to organize the watches on the sea-coast of Norfolk, to arrange for the collections of moneys for the expenses of the watches in each hundred, and to provide that the 'capitalibus constabulariis de hundredis adjungtis mari ... levare et reparari facere signa et fierbares super montes altiores in quolibet hundredo, ita quod patria per illa signa quotiescunque necesse fuit praemuniri posset'². The document fails to define precisely what these 'signa et fierbares' were, but from etymological parallels, it is almost certain that they were beacons or fire-signals of some sort. 'Fierbares' almost certainly contains a latinization of the English word 'fire'. For instance, a similar form occurs in 'fierbota' and 'ferbota', the Latin forms of 'fire-bote' or 'fuel'. Coke, who printed the document in his chapter on beacons, certainly seems to have believed that these signals were beacons.

Because of the first significant appearance of beacons in the context of coastal defence in the 1320s, many historians have seen this decade as that when the beacon system first evolved. Among these is Wood, who stated that the development of the beacon system in England stemmed as the direct result of the dangers threatening the country from France during the 1320s, and more especially, from the middle years of the decade, when England was under menace of invasion from France by

1. C.I.M., 1307-49, p. 209, no. 839.

2. Coke, Fourth Institutes, p. 151.

Isabella and Mortimer. He writes, 'from this evolved over a period of years the great system of watch and ward, which reached its highest during the armada alarm'¹. This suggests that the use of beacons in the system of watch and ward was unknown in England before 1324. In other words, that the inquisition held in that year at Shidambridge was a complete innovation.

The pattern presented by the documentary evidence, however, could certainly be interpreted to give the impression that the foundations of the English beacon system were laid only in the early fourteenth century. First, there is the gaping void of evidence between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, which is in juxtaposition to the spate of references to beacons which followed the inquest of 1324. Such references occur with increasing regularity after 1324: in 1325 and 1326 during the Isabella crisis, and then with the outbreak of war with the French in 1337, they appear again, to recur with constancy throughout the war period of the century. The precision with which the earliest writs concerning beacons are worded certainly conveys the impression that this was a system only recently introduced. The workings and functions of the beacons and their attendants are outlined in meticulous detail to the officials responsible for setting them up. The commission sent to the arrayers in each maritime county from Northumberland to Cornwall on 10 August 1326, for example, instructed the recipients

1. Wood, 'The Beacons of the North of England', p. 4.

'quod certi homines per vos assignarentur, pro vigiliis de hominibus peditibus in omnibus locis ubi expedire videritis, ad custus comitatus illius ubi vigiliae factae fuissent, faciendis, et quod dicti vigiles haberent signum de igne seu alia re competenti, quod a longe videri posset, ita quod homines partium vicinarium trahere se possent ad ignem, vel ad signum de nocte, se opus foret'¹

Here the precise purpose of the fire-signal is explained: the watches were to be provided with a beacon (or other means of signalling) which could be distinguished from far off. This fire-signal was not merely to give warning to the populace, as had been the case with the Orkney beacons, but was also to serve as a muster-point for the men thus alerted. The precision, (which at first sight seems to suggest the careful instruction of the local officials in a new system), is, however, a common feature of all later writs concerning beacons. In 1338, for example, the beacons were to be used to give warning of an enemy descent, and the arrayers were instructed to prepare them², the instructions contained in this writ being similar to those of a commission issued in 1346, which provided that

'si periculum aliquod ex huiusmodi hostium agressibus imineat porterunt congruo termino praemuniri et dictorum hostium malitia, si ad partes illas declinaverint, per huiusmodi ignis illuminationem et praemunionem, per homines partium coadunatis viribus refranari'³.

This phraseology, or slight variations of it, is the most common form of instruction for the remainder of the fourteenth century, although, certain fifteenth century commissions merely order that beacons be set

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1. Foedera, II. ii. 636.
 2. Ibid., p. 1055.
 3. Ibid., III. i. 72.

up, and do not elucidate any explanation why this was to be so.

It has also been claimed that the following paragraph from Caxton's edition of The Cronycles of Englond pointed to the novelty of the beacon system in the 1320s. Commenting on the invasion scare caused by Isabella and Mortimer, he said

'Whenne Kyng Edward herde telle that Quene Isabell and Edward hir sone wolde come into Englon

d with many aliens ... he ordeyned to kepe his castells in Walys as well as in Englon

d ... and let kepe his rivers and also the see costes ... And furthermore, he ordeyned by his patent, and commaunded to make a fire upon every hie hylle besides the rivers, and in lowe contrees for to make hie bekenes of tymbre, that yf it so were that the aliens come unto the land by nyght, that men sholde tend the bekenes that the contre might be warned and come and mete hir enemies'¹.

This is the only evidence which suggests that the beacon system may have been a complete innovation of the 1320s. As evidence it is inconclusive, especially as the Caxton narrative was written over a century after the event.

On the other hand, there is much which points to the validity of the opposite theory. The pattern which emerges in the sources after 1324 is that of a well-organized system, one perhaps too well-organized for it to have been introduced to England only a matter of years previously. In 1325, only one year after the Shidambridge inquiry, a royal writ was sent to the commissioners of array in every English shire, instructing them to array all the fencible men of their respective shires

1. W. Caxton, Cronycles of Englond (London, 1480), cap. 206, fos. 102-102^v (the foliation is my own estimate, as the folios are un-numbered. The B.L. reference for the edition consulted is IB. 55026. Other editions have minor variations in text and spelling).

in accordance with the Statute of Winchester and the ordinance made in the previous parliament, and to 'see that beacons be erected and watchmen placed in all the proper stations'¹. The fact that a copy of this writ was sent to the arrayers in every shire shows that the beacon system was already implemented on a nation-wide basis at this date. The frequent inclusion of the phrase 'as have been of old', or its variants, in relation to the setting up of the beacons at this time further supports this argument.

An examination of the report of the inquisition held in the Isle of Wight yields no suggestion that the beacon was a recent introduction there. In fact, quite the reverse impression is given. The inquisition was held before the two keepers of the maritime lands in the island, John de la Hoese and John de l'Isle. It begins with an investigation concerning the agistment to arms of the £20 freeholders and others in the island, and then reports on the thirty-one 'fires and watches' on the island. Within the liberty of Freshwater, for example, there were two beacons -- at Scharpendorde and Hetdone -- at which 'watch ought to be made by three men by night and two men by day'. In East Medine hundred thirteen beacons were named, and a further sixteen sites were situated in the

1. C.P.R., 1324-7, pp. 216-19.

hundred of West Medine¹. Nowhere in the document is the future tense employed, and this would seem to negate any possibility that the inquiry was an attempt to introduce beacons to the island. What is more likely is that the inquisition was a survey of those beacon sites already in existence on the island, with a view to regularizing the watch at each site. Edward II may also have been taking stock of the defensive resources available to him, since he was faced at the time with the

1. In addition to the two sites in the liberty of Freshwater, the other beacons were situated in the following sites:

East Medine Hundred

1. Below the bridge at Puttokesdone.
2. Near St. Helens at Yarneforde.
3. At Sandham on Rodesburghe.
4. At Shanklin on the hill above Clyne.
5. Smeresdone.
6. La ...
7. La Wyteditch near Appuldercombe.
8. Staundone.
9. Nyweton at la Ode.
10. Atherton on Beredone.
11. Woditone at la Ode.
12. Wyppingham on Rodmeresdone.
13. Ryde.

West Medine Hundred

1. On Chaledone.
2. Atherfelde.
3. On L... Kedone.
4. La Wynde.
5. ...
6. Lusburghe.
7. Gerthholl.
8. Hamstede.
9. Houedburghe.
10. Thomheye.
11. La Roghelonde.
12. ...
13. Wightberghe.
14. ...
15. Emedone.
16. ...

possibility of enemy invasion.

Returning to the Norfolk 'signa et fierbares' mentioned above, one sees that the commission included the instruction that the signals were to be 'levari et reparari'. If these signals were indeed beacons, the fact that they could be repaired indicates that in some places, at least, they must already have been in existence. Had the order merely been for the erection of beacons, then greater doubt would remain.

Evidence from the later fourteenth century, makes it clear that the beacons were closely associated with the duty of watch and ward. The 1326 commission, for example, made provision for the men of the watches to have their fire-signals with them in the places on the coast 'ubi vigiliae factae fuissent'. Later commissions convey similar instructions. The duty of watch and ward was fundamentally of pre-Conquest origin, and was later regularized by statute and other royal instruments in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries¹. Bearing in mind the connexion in the fourteenth century of the beacons with the older system of watch and ward, which was pre-Conquest in origin, together with the fact that the word itself is of Saxon origin, it is difficult to deny the probability of a long tradition of usage of the beacon in England. The only drawback is the startling gap in documentary evidence relating to the beacon during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. During this period of silence there were several threats to England, the chief ones occurring in 1204-5, 1213-14, 1230, 1242, 1264 and 1295. Yet in the sources referring to these threats

1. See Ch. IV.

and the consequent defensive preparations, not one reference to beacons in the coastal areas occurs.

One of the functions of the beacon during the fourteenth century closely resembles that attributed to it by the antiquarians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: it not only gives warning, but it beckons. In other words, it served as a muster-point for the local levies alerted by its light. Now, this second feature was missing in the beacons of the Anglo-Saxon period and the twelfth century, described above. This seems to be a significant difference. It is highly unlikely that the beacon, which was certainly used at an early period in England, should have dropped by the wayside in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, only to be resurrected in the first two decades of the fourteenth¹. If there had in fact been some national system of raising the alarm by means of beacons prior to the fourteenth century, it is strange that no references to it have survived. The most probably explanation for this is that the beacon, along with other visual (as well as audible) signals, may have been employed during this earlier period on a local basis only, as one of the natural methods of giving the alarm available to the men of the coastal watches. Vestiges of other methods of giving warning lingered on well into the fourteenth century.

1. Apparently, there is some evidence to suggest that fire-signals were used by constables of castles, during the Norman and Angevin period, to transmit warnings to the surrounding countryside. From the twelfth century also, fire was used as a medium in lighthouses at Dover and elsewhere along the coast (Russell, 'Fire Beacons in Devon', p. 47). One should not, however, confuse navigational beacons with those which had a military purpose. The 'beekens devant le Port' of Calais mentioned in 1397 were strictly for purposes of navigation (Rot. Parl., iii. 371).

The sudden appearance of references to beacons in the 1320s may therefore be the result of some attempt at the organization of existing beacon sites and watch sites (which in many cases were situated in the same place), into some kind of system for the better defence of the realm. The reign of Edward II had seen large-scale experimentation in the military sphere, particularly in regard to the jurati ad arma¹. Reorganization could well have taken place in this aspect of coastal defence, an area in which jurati service was counted upon, and, furthermore, there was the ever-increasing threat of foreign invasion present during the 1320s. However, one can only speculate, since the existing evidence is too slight. The Isle of Wight inquisition, however, could certainly be interpreted as a move on the part of the crown towards preparation for reorganization of the beacons into some kind of system, although it is evident that the beacons referred to in the report were already in existence at the time, and were not introduced as the result of the inquisition, as some writers have claimed².

Apart from the warning conveyed by fire, other methods were employed to give the alarm whenever necessary. It is almost certain that such methods had been in existence long before the fourteenth century, and these, like the beacons, were taken over and incorporated into the system of national defence. It has been remarked above that from the 1320s, when the first references to beacons occur, provision

1. M.R. Powicke, 'Edward II and Military Obligation', Speculum, xxxi (1956), 83 ff.; - , Military Obligation, pp. 134 ff.

2. E.g., Wood, 'The Beacons of the North of England', p. 4.

was always made in commissions ordering the erection and preparation of beacons for the alarm signal to be given by other methods. Thus, in 1326, the watches were to be equipped with fire-signals, 'seu alia re competenti'¹ (Throughout the 1330s and 1340s, this formula, or variations of it - 'et autres choses que apparteignent'², 'vel alio modo'³ - is commonplace in the commissions, although from the 1350s onwards, it tends to drop out of current usage). This provision, constantly recurring during the earlier period, seems indeed to be a vestige of an earlier usage. Among the alternative means possible were conveyance of the alarm by messengers and also by noise⁴. It appears that the responsibility lay with the persons in charge of the watches, when the commission allowed for choice in the matter, instructing them to do 'melius videris expedire'⁵. Although from the 1350s onwards, this second option is omitted from the terms of the commission, it is certain that alternative methods continued to be employed, since the more copious records of the sixteenth century reveal their continued existence even at that late date⁶.

1. Foedera, II. i. 636.

2. P.R.O., C.81/1758/3.

3. P.R.O., C.76/23, m. 20.

4. Russell, 'Fire Beacons in Devon', p. 48.

5. Foedera, II. ii. 1055 (1338); ibid., III. i. 72 (1346); ibid., p. 239 (1352); P.R.O., C. 76/34, m. 9 (1356); C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 436, Foedera, III. ii. 947-8 (1372); ibid., p. 1045 (1376); C.C.R., 1377-81, p. 38 (1377); C.P.R., 1381-5, pp. 589-91 (1385).

6. Alternative methods of raising the alarm are treated more fully below, pp. 219, 222-5.

The Beacon during the Fourteenth Century

The commencement of hostilities between England and France in 1337 was, not unsurprisingly, accompanied by an increase in the number of references to the beacon. From this year onwards, the order for the preparation of the beacons is included in many of the writs issued for the defence of the realm in time of danger; the most notable instances when this occurred were 1338, 1346, 1351, 1352, 1356, the early 1370s, and 1385-6. The commission issued to the English sheriffs on 15 March 1346 is fairly typical in its phraseology, as the following commission for Kent shows:

'Rex vicecomiti Kantiae, salutem. Quia inimici nostri de Francia congregata eis magna armatorum potentia se parant in quantum poterunt, cum navibus et galeis ad invadendum regnum nostrum Angliae, et nos et nostros, tam per terram quam per mare destruendum, et nostrum dominium subvertendum;

Nos, volentes ipsorum malitiam obviare, et salvationi et defensionem dicti regni nostri circumquaque providere;

Tibi praecipimus, firmiter injungentes, quod aliquod signum commune per ignem super montes, vel alio modo, in comitatu praedicto, ubi et quotiens, et prout opus fuerit, et melius videris expedire, et alias in casu consimili consuevit, fieri facias; per quod homines patriae illius, si periculum aliquod ex huiusmodi hostium aggressibus imineat, poterunt congruo termino praemuniri, et dictorum hostium malitia, si ad partes illas declinaverint, per huiusmodi ignis illuminationem et praemunitioem, per homines partium praedictarum coadunatis viribus refraenari.

Et hoc, sicut te ipsum indempnem servare volueris, nullatenus omittas. Teste regis apud Westmonasterium, xv die Martii¹.

Thus far, as we have seen, the usual term for beacon in these writs is the direct translation into Latin of the English term, 'signal by fire'. However, from about the middle of the fourteenth century,

1. Foedera, III. i. 72. The italics are mine.

the English term 'Bekne', comes increasingly into use¹. A writ of Privy Seal of c. 1346 to the Chancery, ordered that Letters Patent be issued appointing keepers of the maritime lands in the Sussex rapes of Hastings, Lewes, Bremler, Arundel and Chichester, and contained the phrase, 'pour la garde sur la meer, et a faire harynbeknes at autres choses que appartaignent'². The writ was unfortunately undated, but the personnel appointed in each rape correlate with the names of those keepers appointed in the Sussex rapes on 10 August 1346³. This represents the earliest mention of beacons in the vernacular that I have so far come across. What is especially

1. All other writers on this subject are unanimous in ascribing the first appearance of the term in the vernacular to the year 1372. In writs sent to the counties of Kent, Surrey, and Sussex, dated 14 May of that year, it occurred as bekynes (C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 436). On 18 June of the same year, writs to each county, except Hampshire, Kent, Sussex, and Wiltshire, referred to the 'signa communa vocata Beknes' (Foedera, III. ii. 947-8). However, many earlier references exist, which have been overlooked. It seems that the attribution of the first appearance of the word in the vernacular to 1372 was an original error on the part of White ('The Beacon System in Kent', p. 78), one which was duplicated by later writers on the subject. White based his conclusions upon published sources only, thus he overlooked earlier examples which occur in unpublished sources such as the Treaty Rolls.

2. P.R.O., C. 81/1758/3. The term 'harynbekne' closely compares to the various forms found in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 1006, where it appears variously as 'herebeacon', 'herebeacna', and 'Heora Beacna' (A.S. Chronicle, ii. 256-7).

3. P.R.O., C. 76/23, m. 20.

interesting about this example is that while the less formal writ of Privy Seal bears the English name, with no attempted translation into French, the Latin of the Letter Patent still retains the more traditional 'aliquod signum commune per ignem super montes'.

Characteristically, the English form tended to make its earliest appearances in documents of less formal character. For example, in the account of Geoffrey of Kent, mayor of Leicester, from Michaelmas 1350 to Michaelmas of the following year, there appears an entry concerning delivery of wine to the home of a burgess, William Goldsmith, on the Saturday after the feast of St. John ante Portam Latinam, (i.e. 7 May 1351), 'when proclamation for fire-beacons (fir bekenes) to stand on the hills' was made¹. Apart from this being a rare example of an order concerning the beacons being used as a method of dating, the entry is important since it provides another case where the English term was employed, although the royal order for the proclamation had still used the Latin 'signum per ignem'.

From the 1350s, the term in English occurs with increasing regularity in documents emanating from the royal Chancery to local officials. For instance, in July 1352 the sheriffs of England were ordered to erect 'super montes ac alibi in comitatu predicto ubi expedire videtis aliqua signa consuetuda vocata Beknes per ignem'.² Again in 1356 the term occurred in a mandate to the keepers of the

1. Records of the Borough of Leicester, ed. M. Bateson (2 vols., London, 1899-1901), ii. 76.

2. P.R.O., C. 76/30, m.5.

maritime lands in Kent and five other counties, which included the order, 'et signa consueta vocata bekenes per ignem super montes, vel alia loca aptiora in comitatu predicto, per que homines comitatus illius, si periculum aliquod ex huiusmodi hostium aggressibus imineat, lucius et citius poterunt premuniri, fieri et poni facere'¹. The phrasing of this writ, it will be noticed, is practically similar to those earlier ones which omitted the word 'beacon'. The term appears in various different forms such as 'baknes' (1377), 'bekyns' (1385), and 'beekenes' (1397) throughout the remainder of the century². At first, the appearance of the vernacular form in official documents was always accompanied by a translation or explanation of its function in the main language of the document. From the 1380s, however, the term 'beacons' usually stands on its own, with no qualifying description in either Latin or French. Thus, by the fifteenth century, the usual instruction is 'et insuper, signa vocata Bekyns poni facienda in locis consuetis'³.

We now turn to consider who was responsible for the erection, maintenance and supervision of the beacons, a field in which there has been much controversy. Both Wood and Hewitt oversimplified the

1. P.R.O., C. 76/34, m. 9.

2. The beacon was beginning to make its appearance, too, in the development of vernacular literature of the period. In the revised version of Piers Plowman of c. 1377, Langland wrote: '3e brenne, but 3e blaseth nou3te, pat is a blynde bekene' Vision of Piers Plowman, Text B (E.E.T.S.), p.316).

3. Rot. Parl., iii. 527.

the answer to this question. Wood, in his thesis, vaguely attributed their charge, until the mid-fifteenth century at least, 'to special commissioners for defence who had charge of the organization of the beacons'¹. Hewitt, more positively, ascribed the responsibility for them, in coastal areas at least, to the keepers of the maritime lands. This theory, as it happens, was quite correct for the year which he was discussing, 1338, but on closer examination of the available sources it is apparent that at different times, different officials were given the responsibility for the control of the beacons. For example, we have seen that the Norfolk 'signa et fierbares' of 1325 were the responsibility of the constables in each hundred. One is uncertain, however, of who was responsible for the beacons in the Isle of Wight in 1324, as the report of the inquisition makes no reference to this. With other 1325 commissions we are, however, on more positive ground. In this year, it was the commissioners of array in each county who were given the responsibility², and again, in the following year, the same officials were granted this charge³. However, after this latter date, the charge was shifted from the commissioners of array to other officials, although, occasionally during the progress of the century, it

1. Wood, 'The Beacons of the North of England', p. 14. Basically, this statement is correct, although Wood failed to name these officials. His implication, however, is that these commissioners were appointed solely to take charge of the beacons. Too much relevance should not be placed upon this section of Wood's otherwise admirable work. In this chapter, for instance, he firmly states that there was little or no beacon activity between 1324 and 1433, and claims that in the mid-fifteenth century, beacons were in the charge of the Lords Lieutenant of the shire.

2. C.P.R., 1324-7, pp. 216-19.

3. Foedera, II.ii. 636-7.

was returned to the arrayers, notably in 1356 and 1372¹. It seems, therefore, that, as happened so often in many spheres of local administration during the fourteenth century, experimentation was common. Indeed, as the onus of coastal defence was placed upon different officials during the century², so the responsibility for the beacons was shifted accordingly.

At the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War, this responsibility had been placed, for a time at least, upon the keepers of the maritime lands. In September 1337, Bartholomew de l'Isle and the other keepers in Hampshire were ordered to prepare the beacons, while a similar writ instructed Hugh de Courteney and John de Beauchamp to perform the same duty in Somerset³. The same month later saw similar writs for Devon and Dorset⁴. Such was the situation for a decade, the keepers of the maritime lands fulfilling this function, in keeping with their pre-eminence in affairs of coastal defence. We have seen above that in August 1346, keepers were appointed to the maritime lands of the rapes of Sussex, and that their commissions included orders regarding the beacons⁵.

The overall picture, however, is not quite so straightforward. Although the keepers of the maritime lands were given control of the beacons in September 1337, the following August saw the appearance

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1. P.R.O., C. 76/34, m. 9 (1356); Foedera, III. ii. 947-8 (1372).
 2. See Ch. V.
 3. Foedera, II. ii. 996.
 4. C.C.R., 1337-9, p. 179.
 5. P.R.O., C. 76/23, m. 20.

of writs sent to the sheriff of every English county, both coastal and inland, with explicit instructions 'de signis per ignem super montes faciendis'¹. Again, in March 1346, similar writs were issued, addressed 'ad vicecomites, de ignibus praemunitiois super montes providendis'².

The next few decades were to prove the exception rather than the rule. In March 1352, for instance, the abbot of Quarr, as keeper of the Isle of Wight, was instructed to prepare the beacons³. In 1356, orders were issued both to the keepers of the maritime lands and to the arrayers, concerning the beacons⁴. Such was the state of affairs until the early 1370s, when a regularization began to be discerned, not only in regard to the beacons, but to the whole structure of coastal defence. From the year 1372, it appears to have been normal for commissions dealing with beacons to be directed jointly to the sheriff

1. Foedera, II. ii. 1055.

2. Ibid., III. i. 72.

3. Ibid., p.239. The keeper of the Isle of Wight possessed wide powers, which were warranted by the strategic importance of the island. From a quite early date, his powers embraced both those of keepers of the maritime lands and of arrayers. In 1337, Theobald Russell was given command over the keepers of the maritime lands and arrayers in the island (P.R.O., C. 61/49, m. 21). By 1339, these powers were increased so as to directly include the powers of these officials, and so make them redundant in the island (P.R.O., C. 76/14, m.5; C. 76/15, m. 10; C. 76/17, m. 41). It was thus only natural that the keepers of the island should also have been entrusted with the control of the beacons.

4. P.R.O., C. 76/34, mm. 9, 10.

of the county, and the commissioners of array within the county. On 14 May of that year, such commissions were issued naming these officials in the counties of Kent, Surrey and Sussex¹. Such an arrangement was a natural one, in keeping with the contemporary re-organization of the commissions of array, which involved their enlargement, the extension of the duties of the arrayers to embrace those formerly enjoyed by other commissioners for defence, and the inclusion of the sheriff amongst the number of arrayers². The inclusion of control over the beacons in the commission issued to the sheriff and the commissioners of array was a logical step, which lasted well into the fifteenth century, (although, in the later part of this century, the sheriff was not always included.). In keeping with this development of the early 1370s, an ordinance was made in 1377 for the defence of the Thames estuary and the approaches to London, which stressed that the charge to set up beacons be placed upon the sheriffs, constables, and other ministers of the crown³.

It is therefore evident that, despite Hewitt's suggestion, 'the control of these warning signals in the coastal areas lay with the keepers of the maritime lands' only occasionally. Obviously, the determination of the control of the beacons, as with other areas of defence, was still liable to change throughout the fourteenth century,

1. C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 436.

2. See Ch. V.

3. C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 77; Rot. Parl. iii, 386.

and would not fully achieve a positive identity until the sixteenth century. Until this latter period there was no rigidity in the system which provided for the beacons. The most striking evidence for this is the fact that commissions for defence issued to the divers officials mentioned above did not always necessarily include orders pertaining to the beacons: in many cases, orders were sent to the sheriffs, keepers of the maritime lands, arrayers, and others, which made no mention whatsoever of the beacons. In 1346, for example, commissions which embodied instructions for the beacons were issued twice: to the sheriffs of the various counties on 15 March, and to the keepers of the maritime lands in Sussex on 10 August. But five other commissions for defence were issued during that year (mainly in March), which made no reference at all to the beacons¹. In every other year when external danger threatened, the story was the same.

It is therefore wrong to treat the English defensive system of the fourteenth century as unchanging. In its basic outlines, the pattern remained the same, yet within the system, minute changes were ever taking place. Just so was the case with regard to the beacons, thus, to take the example of the beacon system at any given time during the fourteenth century as typical of the century as a whole would be erroneous.

We now turn to examine how exactly the beacon was employed within the national defence system during the fourteenth century. Direct

1. P.R.O., C. 76/22, mm. 20, 22-5, 30.

evidence is, unfortunately, very scanty, so any picture reconstructed must of necessity be incomplete. Sir Arthur Evans has described the workings of the beacon system outlined in the 1324 inquisition in the Isle of Wight thus:

'On Bembridge and Freshwater Downs were groups of three beacons; elsewhere and along the neighbouring coastal tract were two set together. When over ten ships were sighted, one beacon -- and one beacon only -- was fired on the low downs as a simple warning. Two were lit when an actual landing threatened, responded to by the lighting of a single beacon throughout the maritime districts. A second was kindled on the appearance of all three fire signals on the Island Downs -- a call to repulse an actual landing -- and this S.O.S. was followed by the lighting of the inland beacons'¹.

Sir Arthur neglected to cite any sources for his description, but it is obvious that he based it upon later evidence. However, the implication to be taken from his text is that this, in its essence, was the way in which the beacon system functioned in the later Middle Ages: the initial warning would carry along the coast and also further inland to spread the alarm to the country. It has been remarked elsewhere that the inland shires were responsible for sending their fencible men for defence service in the maritime lands of specified coastal shires. This was clearly delineated in 1338. The arrayers in Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire were to be intendant to the keepers of the maritime lands in Hampshire, and were to send their men to the coastal belt there in the event of enemy threat. The other county groupings consisted of Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire for

1. Sir A. Evans, article on beacons in The Times, 18 April 1935, pp. 13-14. See also C. G. Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army (Oxford, 1966), pp. 70-1.

service in the maritime lands of the last; Leicestershire, Northants and Rutland men would serve in the maritime lands in Lincolnshire, and those of Shropshire and Staffordshire would serve in Lancashire. Surrey was similarly attached to Sussex, Hertfordshire and Middlesex to Essex, and Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire were to send their levies to Yorkshire. The men of the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon would serve in Norfolk and Suffolk, whilst the men of purely maritime counties served, of course, in the maritime lands of their own shires¹.

Although the groupings sometimes differed slightly, this was the general arrangement. It was repeated in 1346² and again in 1360³, and evidence suggests that for this purpose, Wales was divided into two units of North and South Wales⁴. The beacons must have provided a fairly speedy method of passing the alarm into the inland shires, so that the potential force available for defence in the maritime zone could be mobilized as fast as possible. Once the system was put into operation, the word would have been quickly spread, and here the use of the term 'system' is no exaggeration: it is almost certain that there was some degree of interdependence between individual beacon sites. As we have seen, by 1337 beacons had been established in every shire, and each shire contained a substantial number of them. Hence Froissart's remark that in 1386 the English coasts were protected with beacon sites

1. P.R.O., C. 61/50, m. 7; B.L., Cotton MS. Julius C. iv, fo. 129^v.

2. P.R.O., C. 76/22, mm. 24-5, 27.

3. C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 97-8. See pp. 106-8 and Maps 1-3 following p.107.

4. P.R.O., E. 101/19/13, E. 101/612/34; Parl. Writs, II. ii. 660.

from the river Humber to Cornwall¹. The 1324 inquiry revealed thirty-one sites in the Isle of Wight alone. A further thirty-eight in Devonshire have been positively identified as medieval, mainly from place-name evidence, and some of these sites may even be of pre-fourteenth century date². Lambarde's 'Carde of the Beacons in Kent' of 1576 revealed a total of over fifty sites in that county, many of which can be recognized as medieval, although others are of Tudor institution³. In the north of England, sixteenth-century figures reveal forty-three beacons on the east coast, with a further 161 inland, and thirteen on the west coast⁴. It is difficult, again, to say with certainty how many of these were employed during the fourteenth century, but it is interesting to note the greater incidence of beacons on the east coast, which was more vulnerable to attack from the continent than was the western seaboard, and also their greater density in central inland areas, where attacks by the Scots could be expected.

In view of the dearth of evidence, a certain amount of conjecture is bound to enter any summary concerning the function of the beacons in fourteenth century England. Happily, the ordinance for the erection of beacons on the banks of the river Thames in 1377 allows one to tread

1. Froissart, xi. 372.

2. Russell, 'Fire Beacons in Devon', pp. 277-97 and map following *ibid.*, p. 302.

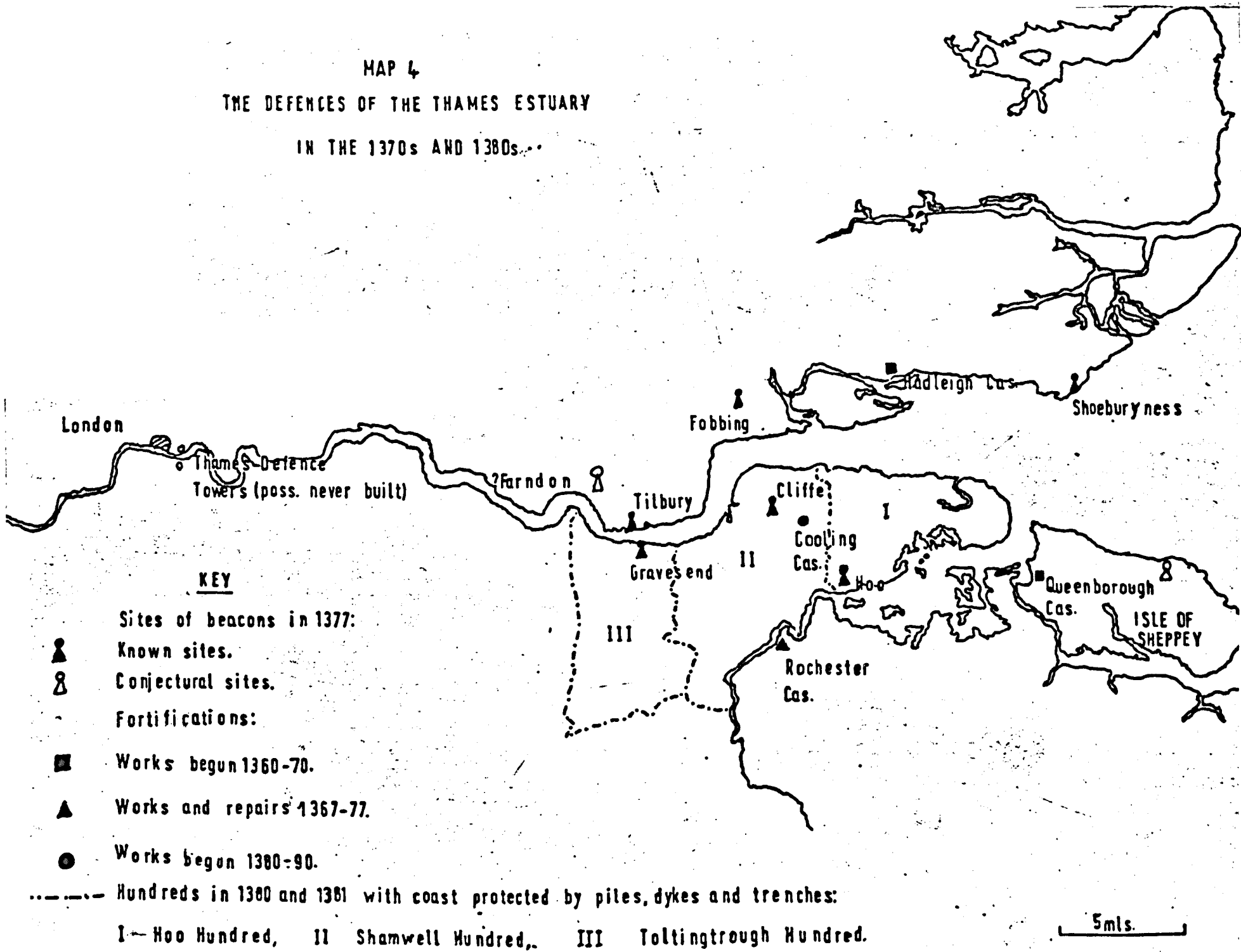
3. W. Lambarde, Perambulation of Kent (London, 1576), end-piece.

4. Wood, 'The Beacons of the North of England', pp. 21, 35.

firmer ground. On 7 July of that year, the Council, acting on the king's behalf, sent to the sheriffs of Essex and Kent copies of the ordinance 'for the safety of the counties of Kent and Essex, to wit, the towns on the river Thames and shipping in the ports from perils which may suddenly happen by the king's enemies'¹, which ordinance had been noted in the record of the previous parliament. It provided for a beacon to be erected in the Isle of Sheppey, and another at Shoebury Ness, on the north side of the estuary in Essex. A further pair were to be set up at Hoo in Kent and at Fobbing in Essex, and others at Cliffe in Kent and at Tilbury in Essex. Finally, beacons at Gravesend on the Kentish side and at Farndon in Essex completed the system. The responsibility for the erection of these beacons was placed upon the shoulders of the sheriffs, constables, and others of the king's officials in the two counties, and watches were to be provided at each beacon as soon as it were erected. In practice, the system was to work as follows: as soon as the watches at Sheppey or Shoebury sighted the approach of enemy shipping, 'coming with sail or oars toward the river', they were to set fire to their beacons, 'and therewith to make all the noise they may with horn and shouting to warn the country round to come to the river in force'. The men of the counties were warned, under the gravest penalties, to make for the river immediately on seeing or hearing the alarm, 'in order to guard the said towns and shipping from harm'.

1. C.P.R., 1377-81, pp. 77; Rot. Parl., iii. 386. See also Map 4, following p.219.

MAP 4
 THE DEFENCES OF THE THAMES ESTUARY
 IN THE 1370s AND 1380s



Thus, here we have a clearly defined picture of the way in which the alarm system of the Thames estuary functioned. Although the ordinance does not say so, it is evident that the beacons were positioned so that those sited further up the river could each see their preceding neighbour downstream, thus once the initial alarm had been signalled, it could be transmitted inland with the least possible delay. Lambarde's map to some extent verifies this. The beacons at Sheppey, Hoo, and Gravesend are marked on the map, which gives not only the site of each beacon, but indicates also, by means of connecting lines, which beacons were visible from other beacon sites. The Sheppey beacon and the Hoo beacon are connected by a line, so must have been visible to one another. By the sixteenth century, the Cliffe beacon had been replaced by another, five miles to the east at All Hallows, but the Hoo beacon was visible from All Hallows and the geographical features of the region make it certain that the two last were visible to each other. The sixteenth-century system went from All Hallows to Gravesend via Frynsbury, so there is on the map no direct line between the two. However, in view of the physical features of the estuary, it is obvious that the beacons in the system were visible to one another, and that the system would work effectively. Not only would they serve to spread the alarm inland, to warn the city of London of the danger, but fortified places situated on the estuary would also receive the warning, and could hold their garrisons in readiness. The two castles of Queenborough in Sheppey and Hadleigh in Essex, the one built specifically to meet the needs of coastal defence, the other rebuilt on a large scale to meet the same need, were sited in places on the estuary, from which several of the beacons were easily visible, and when Cooling castle came to be

built in the 1380s, that too was sited with a good view of the estuary and the beacons. The Essex beacons must have been a very important feature in the defence of the county and the realm. So much so, that in 1404 one of the charges levelled against conspirators in that county who were favourable to the cause of Richard II was that they planned 'to kepyn Frenchemennes aryvying and for to sawe the bekenes be the coost that the countre schulde not bewar of here aryvyng'.¹

The watches at the beacons were to be kept both day and night, this being the common practice whenever the crown issued orders for the erection of beacons. The ordinance of 1377 did not specify the number of men to be employed in the watch, but it is known that in 1324 it was established that this should be three men by night and two by day.² In 1337, this number was increased to 'quatuor, vel quinque aut sex homines ad arma vel armatos'.³ No doubt, from time to time and place to place the number and composition of the watches varied. There is

1. Select Cases in the Court of King's Bench, ed. G. O. Sayles (Selden Soc., 1971), vii. 151-5, no. 26.

2. C.I.M., 1307-49, p. 209, no. 839. Comparison between the workings of English and French beacons is difficult, owing to the dearth of evidence on the subject in French sources. However, an ordonnance made for the keeping of beacons in Narbonne in 1358 stated that

'que la nuez scian ij hommes, d'els qual lo un velhe quant l'autre dormira; et lo jour j homme sobre los tors et los luocz pur autre sobre aysio stabilist, ses move d'equi' (L. Ménard, *Histoire...de Nismes* (Paris, 1751), ii. 231 (Preuves)). I am grateful to Professor K.A. Fowler for bringing this reference to my attention.

3. Foedera, II. ii. 996 (4 September 1337).

occasional evidence of hobelars being used in conjunction with the beacons. For instance, the assessment for watch and ward on the Kent coast made by William de Clynton, earl of Huntingdon, John de Cobham and Thomas de Aldon in 1337 revealed quite substantial numbers of hobelars in several of the watches. The watch at Greyston consisted of six hobelars and five men-at-arms, while that in the Isle of Thanet consisted of fourteen men-at-arms and six hobelars¹. Most of the evidence for the use of hobelars in the watches is, however, later than the fourteenth century. A commission appointing arrayers for Kent in April 1450, for example, included an order to array hobelars and to set up beacons, but it is not quite clear whether these hobelars were to be used to supplement the beacons². The antiquarians of the seventeenth century, however, seemed to think that hobelars were used in such a role. Camden, for example, states that, 'formerly the horsemen called by our ancestors, Hobelars, were settled in several places to signify the approach of an enemy by day'³. Lambarde added, 'so were it good, that for the more speedie spreading of the knowledge of the enemies comming, they the beacons were assisted with some horsemen (anciently called of their Hobies or Nags Hobeliers) that besides the fire (which in a bright shining day is not so well descried) might also run from

1. Hearne, Textus Roffensis, pp. 236-42.

2. C.P.R., 1446-52, p. 383. Sixteenth-century evidence certainly bears out the connexion of hobelars with these watches. One sixteenth century map of Plymouth Hoe shows the defences of the area, and the beacons with mounted hobelars standing by (R.A. Preston, Gorges of Plymouth Fort (typescript, University of Toronto and Military Academy of Canada, 1953), frontispiece).

3. Camden, Britannia, i. 219-20.

beacon to beacon, and supply that notice of the danger on hand'¹.

The association of hobelars with the beacons seems to have been a natural one. Light horsemen as scouts and message bearers were used in border warfare, and would be useful as additional methods of conveying the alarm, especially in conditions which were unsuitable to the use of beacons, as Lambarde stated.

Indeed, as has been mentioned above, the beacon was only one of the methods employed during the fourteenth century to convey warnings of enemy danger. Along with visual signals, audible ones were also used. Russell makes the point that for centuries noise had been used to spread the alarm by the watches on 'watch and ward hills, natural promontaries which gave good, clear views of the surrounding countryside, and which from time immemorial had been natural sites for the watch to be held at'². The persons of these watches who shouted the alarm became known as 'hoopers', from the 'hooping' or shouting which they did. It is interesting to note that the watches named in the 1377 ordinance were to give the alarm not just by the fire signal, but were also to make as much noise as possible 'with horn and with shouting'. Thus, one sees the fusion of two ancient methods of raising the alarm. The use of horns for raising the alert was well known in another context. The sheriff could raise the hue and cry by means of a horn or shouting.

1. Lambarde, Perambulation of Kent, p. 68.

2. Russell, 'Fire Beacons in Devon', p. 252.

In 1307, for example, the sheriff of Notts and Derby did so on three occasions: 'le viscounte pur assembler plus de genz ... leua la menee ... de corn ... e ... fist lever la menee la terce foiz a corn e bouche'¹. Muster rolls of the jurati frequently describe the constables, centenars or vintenars leading the troops as being equipped with horns².

Non-visual methods of warning were many and varied, so that the fire-signal was by no means the sole method whereby the alarm was transmitted. Warnings by noise, such as the shouting or the blowing of horns, or the use of messengers such as hobelars to carry the warning from beacon to beacon, were used in preference to the fire-signals, as alternatives when visibility was bad, as in fog or 'in a bright shining day'. One of the most suitable methods of raising the alarm by noise was through the ringing of church bells. In November 1338, for example, the sheriffs of several coastal counties were ordered to arrange that one bell, and one bell only, was to be rung in normal circumstances in churches situated within seven leagues from the sea, and that the ringing of all the bells should take place only in the event of an enemy attack³.

Such were the other methods available to the persons in charge of

1. Select Cases in the Court of King's Bench, ed. Sayles (Selden Soc., 1939), iii. 195-6, no. 102.

2. For example, the vintenars of Cobham, Drayton, Harmondsworth, and other Middlesex vills in c. 1338 were equipped with horns (Greater London R.O., Acc. 1085, F.P. 9). See also Ch. VI.

3. Foedera, II. ii. 1066. Other contemporary examples of the use of church bells in France for raising the alarm have been noted (Hewitt, Organization of War under Edward III, p. 5, n. 5).

the beacons, thereby fulfilling the clause which provided for alternative means of passing on the alarm. It appears that where such a choice was given, the incentive for transmitting the warning to the surrounding countryside by means of the beacons, 'vel alio modo', was in the hands of the local officials, who were to execute their charges 'melius videris expedire'. In certain cases when the warning was to be given there is no mention of the means by which it is to be transmitted. A writ of June 1341, which ordered the watchers be appointed on the coasts ('de exploratoribus deputandis'), to warn of the approach of the enemy, gave no indication of how this warning was to be transmitted. The sheriffs were ordered 'quod super costera maritima in locis in balliva tua, ubi expedire videris, certos exploratores, per quos homines parare illarum super aggressibus huiusmodi inimicorum nostrorum si ad partes illas declinaverint premuniri potuerint deputari'¹.

There is very little evidence on the question of the cost of the beacons and their watches during the fourteenth century. It appears, however, that the cost of their upkeep was borne by the local populace rather than by the king. Coke, in his Institutes, made reference to a levy known as 'beconagium', which 'signifieth money due or payable for the maintenance of the beacons, or the watching of the same'². He mentions that the costs were originally levied upon the local hundreds as a whole, sometimes each hundred being responsible for the beacons and watches within its own boundaries. This was certainly, although not

1. P.R.O., C. 76/16, m. 19^v.

2. Coke, Fourth Institutes, p. 149. See also, Professor Ward, 'Some Observations on the Antiquity and Use of Beacons', Archaeologia, i (1779), 4.

always, the case during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and may have been the case during the fourteenth century. The beacons were closely connected with the local watches, which were supported by contributions levied upon the hundred in which the watches were situated. The 1325 ordinance 'pro vigiliis observandis in comitatu praedicto [Norfolk] a Lynne usque Yermouth' printed by Coke, ordered the chief constables of hundreds 'adjungtis mari' and the sub-constables to erect beacons along the coastal tract, with their accompanying watches, and made provision 'quod ipse constabularius capitalis per avizam constabulariorum villarum et aliorum proborum hominum agistamentium facere fideliter denariorum pro vadiis vigiliorum in hundredo praedicto, instantem quod ordinatione solvendis de septimana in septimana, ita quod defectus in vigiliis praedictis nullo modo inveniatur'¹. However, it is not certain how much of the moneys raised was spent on the beacons themselves, if any of it was. The men of the watches were to receive 3d. each per day in wages, and in every hundred, except that of North Erpingham, the total of moneys assessed equalled exactly the amounts which would have been spent on each watch, leaving no surplus to pay for materials for the beacons. (The beacons of this period used wood, twigs and other timber as a combustible, and as this could be found locally, there was probably no expenditure on materials). The moneys were, in this particular case, assessed on the villis of the hundred. Hundreds which had no coastline

1. Coke, Fourth Institutes, p. 151.

and contained no watches contributed to the expenses of the neighbouring coastal hundreds which did have watches to maintain¹. For example,

'Item, fiet unum vigiliū in hundredo de Happing in duobus locis, videlicet, apud Happingborow per 4 homines et apud Wasluesham per 4 homines, eo quod dictum hundredum jungit se mari a Walcote usque Wimbedale in loco periculoso per 6 leucas. Et hundreda de Taverham, Depwade, Shropham et Disse adjungunt eidem hundredo de Happing ad contribuendum ad vigilia illius faciēda, videlicet, hundredum de Taverham 2s. per septimanam, Depwade 3s. per septimanam, Shropham 5s. per septimanam, et Disse 2s. per septimanam, et dictum hundredum de Happing 2s. per septimanam, Et sciendus est quod 60 villae sunt in hundredis praedictis ad vigilia illius faciēda'²

The entries for each of the other hundreds are similar. North Erpingham, however, had watches in two places—Runton and Trimmingham -- each served with five men. The hundred was assessed at 12s. 6d. a week, and two inland hundreds also contributed to the watches there, South Erpingham paying 6s. 8d. a week, and Mitford 3s. 6d. After the wages of ten men at 3d. each per day had been paid, there was a small surplus left over from the total sum each week, which may have possibly been expended upon material for the beacons in the hundred.

1. Such an assessment upon the hundred had been in operation during the preceding century. By a commission for appointing watches on the Norfolk coast in 1291, it was provided that 'forasmuch as it appeared to the commissioners that this hundred joined to the sea from Monesley Beck to Walcote for the space of four leagues, they appointed a watch to be kept day and night by six men of Kasewyk, and that the Hundreds of Humbleyard and Forehowe should contribute to the expences of the same' (W.T. Spurdens, 'The Hundred of Trunstead', Norfolk Archaeology, iii (1852), 80-1).

2. Coke, Fourth Institutes, pp. 150-1.

Moneys for the upkeep of the watches were usually levied upon the hundred in the fashion described above, but it appears that moneys for the watches could also be assessed upon the landowners within each shire. The 1326 commission, for example, states 'quod omnes et singuli qui terras tenent in comitatu predicto, ad contributionem faciendam pro dictis vigiliis in eodem comitatu'¹. Both methods persisted well into the sixteenth century².

Forms of Beacons

The term 'beacon' in English is an ambiguous one, its meaning embracing the lighthouse for the guidance of shipping, the familiar 'cresset on a pole' type which figures widely in heraldry, and the

1. Foedera, II. i. 636-7.

2. For example, it was stated in 1588 that 'The hundred of Salford is to paie for the watchinge of the Beacon of Rivington Pike from the tenth daie of July untill the thirtieth of September then next following, which cometh to four score and two daies, after the rate of 16 pence, the daie and night, cometh to some of 25 9s. 4d.' (B.L., Harley MS. 1926, Art. 42, fo. 58^v).

On the other hand, the 'Auncient Order for Beacons' of 1586 once again placed the burden on the landowners of the shire:- 'Item, For and towards the repaieracions and makinge of ye saied severall beacons and the necessarye stuffe therto appertayninge as allso for the daylye and nightlye wages of the watchers of the saied beacons. It is ordered that everye lord within the Countie of Northants - xs.; every knight, vis. viijs.; every esquier 5s.; everye gentellman iijs.; everye other substantial honest yeoman ijs.; and everye mann sett at 6x in the last subsidie xijd. - and everye other at v 2' vjd' (Musters, Beacons, and Subsidies in the County of Northants, ed. J. Wake (Northants Rec. Soc., 1926), p. 8).

strange cylindrical stone towers of the Napoleonic war period, to name but a few examples. What precisely did the term mean to the defenders of England during the fourteenth century?

'Before the reign of Edward 3', Coke informs us, 'there were but stackes of wood set upon high places, which were fired when the comming of enemies were descried, but in his reign pitch boxes as they now be, were in stead of those stackes of wood set up and this properly is a beacon'¹. Here we have a description of two sorts of beacon, the earlier form being the simple stack of wood, which had probably been in use from the earliest times. We know with certainty that a type of bonfire of 'heath, wood and tar' was used as a beacon in the Orkneys in 1136². This primitive type of fire-signal was still in use in the fourteenth century, by which time a certain development upon the basic stack of wood had evolved. By the 1320s, circular stone structures, very similar in appearance to lime kilns, were built to accommodate the wood stack. The form of these beacons is known since two have been discovered; one at Niton in the Isle of Wight, and the other on the coast at Merthyr Mawr in Glamorganshire. The discovery of both led to much controversy as to their precise identity, but both have since been identified as beacons, and dated by archaeological evidence to

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1. Coke, Fourth Institutes, p. 148.
 2. See above, p. 196 , n. 2.

the early fourteenth century¹.

The structure near St. Catherine's Oratory at Niton has been identified from a survey of 1566 as the beacon mentioned in the 1324 inquisition as being on Chale Down. It is situated on top of a barrow, and consists of a circular stone wall 6ft. 9in. in internal diameter, the walls 13 in. thick, and 2ft. 2in. tall at their highest surviving point. On the north and south sides of the structure are arched projections which served as flues.

The Merthyr Mawr beacon is a similar structure. It is about 6ft. 6in. in internal diameter, and has the characteristic short flues on two sides to provide ignition, draught and drainage. This type of beacon must have been in widespread use during the fourteenth century, even though Coke said that the wood stacks were replaced during the reign of Edward III. It continued in use in the sixteenth century and even later.

When Coke mentioned the fact that pitch boxes were introduced under Edward III, he may have been thinking of an ordinance concerning the beacons in Kent, which was issued in 1337. This instructed that pitch be burned in the beacons, it being a more reliable fuel in that

1. For the reports on these discoveries, see G. L. Dunning, 'Excavation of a Barrow on St. Catherine's Hill, Niton, Isle of Wight', Proc. Hants F.C., x (1930), 12-24; - , 'A Medieval Fire Beacon at Merthyr Mawr, Glamorgan', Arch. Camb., xcii (1937), 331-3. The discovery of both led to controversy. The Merthyr beacon was first discovered in 1905, and described in a field report as a crematorium (M. Evanson, 'Antiquities on the Sand Hills at Merthyr Mawr, Glamorganshire', Arch. Camb., viii (1908), 264-5). The Niton beacon was excavated in August and September 1925. For the subsequent controversy over its purpose and identity, see the Isle of Wight County Press for 19 September, 10, 17, 24, 31 October, and 7 and 21 November 1925.

it showed better and lasted longer than twigs, which hitherto had been the usual fuel burned¹. The fire boxes or pitchpots were obviously a more sophisticated form of beacon, and it is from these that one derives the standard image of the beacon -- the medieval cresset or 'fire-cage' mounted on a pole with a ladder attached. The reference to twigs in the above ordinance would imply that the cresset was in use before 1337: twigs were hardly suitable for the bonfire type or 'kiln' type of beacons, which burned rather larger pieces of wood, but they could be burned in a small brazier or cresset. The adoption of the newer form of beacon did not mean that wood was no longer employed as a combustible: the wood stack remained in use well into the modern period, as sixteenth century illustrations of them testify. Pottery sherds found at both the Niton and Merthyr Mawr sites revealed a continued usage of both sites well into the sixteenth century.

In addition to these free-standing forms of beacon, there were other types which were mounted upon buildings. Church towers were a natural choice, especially in low-lying country. Lambarde's map shows several examples of this in Kent. In the north of England the cressets were known as 'broches' and many examples occur of their being fitted to buildings, either castles or churches².

1. T. Philipot, Villare Cantianum (London, 1776), p. 6. The sheriff was instructed to set up the beacons along the coastal tract wherever necessary, 'cum Pitchpot et non cum minuto ligno, quia huiusmodi signa magis apparebunt et longius durabunt'.

2. Cal. Letters and Papers, Henry VIII, xi. 422, art. 1048 (Pontefract castle); B.L., Cotton MS. Augustus I, l. 13 (Carlisle castle).

Lack of documentary evidence for the fourteenth century makes it almost impossible to ascertain with any certainty just how efficient a warning system the beacons provided. One has to bear in mind that the country would normally have already been placed upon the alert by royal orders, and that the beacons provided the final warning when the general danger became immediate danger. Certainly, the watches and beacons did not function successfully in 1338 when Southampton and other places were burned, nor indeed, in 1360, when the French surprised the townsfolk of Winchelsea at Mass, and did grave damage to the town. On numerous other occasions the French and their Spanish allies made successful surprise attacks at places situated on the coast. But despite the drawbacks of the beacon system, its continued use in England for several centuries strongly suggests a certain success.

Of the disadvantages of the system one of the greatest was its susceptibility to calling out the local levies on false alarms. No evidence for this remains for the fourteenth century, but the rigorous steps taken by the Tudors to combat this disadvantage suggests that the even less sophisticated system of the fourteenth century would be even more prone to false alarms¹. Despite this, the beacons did provide a

1. In 1586, for instance, it was ordered 'that ther be no beacon fiered untill two of the justices of the Peace at least come to the same place (Musters, Beacons and Subsidies, ed. Wake, p. 8). Many other instances occur of responsible persons having to be present before the beacons could be ignited, in an attempt to prevent confusion such as that caused in 1545 when a muster of men from Worcester got as far as Wantage in supposed aid of Portsmouth, before it was learned that the alarm which was raised by the beacons was false (Cal. Letters and Papers, Henry VIII, xx. 653, art. 1330 (31 July 1545)). Under the Tudors, the spreading of false alarms was viewed with extreme gravity, and persons guilty could be imprisoned (Acts of Privy Council (Elizabeth I), New Series, xv. 14 (1587); ibid., xvi. 192 (1588)). Compare this with the fourteenth-century attitude towards the spreading of false rumours (Ch. XI, pp. 319, 323-4 and Alban and Allmand, 'Spies and Spying in the Fourteenth Century', p. 95).

system whereby the local levies and the men of the countryside around could be speedily raised for defence of the realm whenever danger from without threatēned, and as such remained an integral part of the system of national during the fourteenth century, playing an important role within the system. Possibly based on tradition of previous usage, it seems that the beacon underwent some regularization in the early part of the fourteenth century, and although not a permanent feature, being only called upon when danger from foreign enemies threatened, the influence of an increased incidence of war during that century ensured that the government had frequent recourse to order the setting up of beacons to meet the increased and more frequently occurring danger. The changing course and fortunes of that war led to experiments and changes in many spheres of military organization. It appears that the beacon was also subjected to this, and the system which evolved from the troubled years of the fourteenth century was to remain in its basic form the main means of warning the country of impending peril for several centuries to come.

CHAPTER NINE

FORTIFICATIONS IN ENGLISH COASTAL DEFENCE

While the English defensive system in the fourteenth century relied mainly upon the levies of the coastal shires, an important role was also played by fixed points of fortification. Although the fourteenth-century phase of the Hundred Years' War was mainly offensive from the English standpoint, French raids on the coasts and Scottish incursions in the north revealed a need for such fortified strongpoints to back up the local defensive forces. In consequence, the period between 1337 and 1389 saw widespread activity in the sphere of fortifications, on the coasts, in the north, and also in inland parts of the realm. For the purposes of this study, only the fortresses and fortified towns concerned with defence against continental enemies will be dealt with.

Fortified places were needed on the coast for a number of reasons. In the first instance, the pattern of French attacks throughout the period was usually aimed at towns, where the greatest material and psychological damage could be inflicted. It was thus necessary to fortify coastal places, such as Portsmouth and Southampton, in order to increase their resistance to attacks, and also to make them strong enough to deter an enemy from attacking them. Secondly, in the event of an invasion

attempt, greater effort would be required on the part of an enemy to capture a fortified place than would be necessary to overrun a force of men in the field. Thus, on landing, an enemy commander faced with such an obstacle, would have two courses open to him: he could attempt to take it or by-pass it. Either course would be dictated by the needs of strategy: in the first instance, at least a portion of the troops under his command would be committed to a specific locality, perhaps for a considerable length of time; in the second case, a commander might by-pass a stronghold, only then to find that his rear was not secured. The first instance, moreover, was advantageous to the defenders in that a part of their adversary's force would be tied down in a known locality, to which reserve forces could be directed to deal with them. The defenders would also know that, for a while, at least, inland areas would be secure from attack while the enemy forces were engaged elsewhere. English military operations during the Hundred Years War exemplify both these ways of thinking. Why Henry V chose to capture Harfleur in 1415 is obvious: the securing of a beachhead and of his rear combined with the blow to the prestige of the Armagnac government, which allowed an enemy to take with impunity such a strategically important town. One may contrast this with the Black Prince's expedition of 1356. Fast-moving, intent on creating havoc in French territory, the English army tactfully by-passed all fortresses and strongholds (with the exception of Romorantin), to besiege which would have wasted time and possibly men.

It is clear, then, that the English appreciated the strategy of fortress warfare, hence the concern for fortifications during

the period 1337-89 and the widespread royal and public building programmes during this period. Individuals, through fear and regard for the protection of personal possessions, also took an interest in fortifications.

Because of the influence of prolonged war, it is fair to say that at any particular moment during the period from 1337-89, somewhere in England building works of a military nature were being carried out. Coastal towns, such as Exeter, Portsmouth and Southampton, royal castles, such as Portchester, Hadleigh and Queenborough, private castles, such as Bodiam, Cooling and Saltash, monasteries, such as Battle abbey and Lewes priory, were all fortified to a greater or lesser degree. In many cases, activity might amount to little more than running repairs. At Exeter, for example, in every year from which a Receiver's Account Roll has survived, there is evidence of a constant minor expenditure on the upkeep of the city walls. In 1342-3, for instance, minor repairs to the east and south gates totalled 2s.7d., while 13s.8d. was expended on the walls themselves.¹ In 1344-5, repairs totalled 28s.9½d.,² and in 1351-2 'expensis circa murum civitatis predicta iuxta Crikelpytte' amounted to 52s.3d.³ The recurrence of such paltry sums expended upon the walls throughout the period suggests that the works carried out were minor alterations and routine maintenance, as was certainly the case in 1379 when 2s. was paid to

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1. Exeter R.O., Receiver's Account Roll, 16-17 Ed. III.
 2. Ibid., Receiver's Account Roll, 18-19 Ed. III.
 3. Ibid., Receiver's Account Roll, 25-6 Ed. III.

four labourers 'pro spiniis et vepribus circa murum de Snayltour succidendis et deponendis'.¹ In the surviving sections of wall, particularly those near the site of the south gate, are patches of irregular masonry which bear testimony to constant maintenance. At Winchester, the city account rolls testify to constant repairs to the walls during the 1350s and 1370s.²

Although the foregoing account suggests that there was widespread activity in the sphere of fortifications, there was another side to the coin. In many places defences were allowed to fall into decay in times of peace, or local inhabitants might object to the burdens of maintaining fixed defences. The crown was thus frequently obliged to instruct burgesses of towns to place their defences in order. The burgesses of Norwich, for example, were commanded in 1378 to scour their choked-up ditches and to carry out repairs to the walls of the town.³

In many other towns, even those in particularly vulnerable locations, little work was carried out on the defences. Sandwich, for instance, seems to have been protected during the fourteenth century by an earthen bank, to which was added in 1386 the captured sections of the French prefabricated invasion fort.⁴ The town did, however, have stone gates. Winchelsea

1. Ibid., Receiver's Account Roll, 3-4 Richard II.

2. Winchester R.O. (now amalgamated with Hampshire R.O.), Winchester City Account Rolls, 38/BX/CR1/1, mm.4, 4^v; 38/BX/CR1/2, m.1; 38/BX/CR1/6, m.f.

3. C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 121.

4. Turner, Town Defences in England and Wales, pp. 163-4; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., ii. 147. Knighton, ii. 212 claims that the sections were taken to Winchelsea, while J.J.N. Palmer (England, France and Christendom, p. 75) states that they were incorporated in the defences of Dover.

also appears to have been defended by a bank and ditch, its only masonry defences being those of the town gates.¹ Elsewhere, severe defects in the fabric of fortifications were in evidence. Castle Cornet, Guernsey, was described in 1374 as being in a seriously dilapidated state.² But whereas, as at Castle Cornet, such defects were rectified, at other places fortifications were allowed to remain in a below-average condition. Canterbury castle, revealed in an inquiry of 1335 as being in a disastrous state of repair, did not receive substantial attention until 1390.³ On the other hand, at an obsolete fortress such as Old Sarum, attempts were made to improve the defences in periods of danger in the 1330s, 1340s, 1350s and 1370s.⁴

Local attitudes towards fortifications also differed. Although the commons might frequently point in parliament to the necessity for fortifications for their protection, if those fortifications damaged their interests, they would not hesitate to oppose them. The Londoners, in 1339 were keen to have the river approaches to the city protected by bretaches and piles, but once the danger was passed, royal permission was sought for their removal.⁵ Piles in the river Avon in 1372 were also

1. Turner, Town Defences, pp. 176-9.

2. P.R.O., E.101/90/5, 8, 11, 12.

3. H.K.W., ii. 589-90. The concentration on the fortifications of the city during the 1370s and 1380s may, however, have reduced the usefulness of the castle as a defensive structure.

4. C.C.R., 1337-9, p. 558; C.C.R., 1346-9, p. 430; C.C.R., 1349-54, pp. 112, 310; C.C.R., 1354-60, pp. 152, 272, 468; C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 218.

5. C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 172.

a cause for grievance by the commons.¹ Evidently defences were accepted in times of danger, but were not tolerated if they were a hindrance to trade and commerce. Similarly they were resented if they encroached upon the real property of individuals. Henry Peverell, the keeper of Southampton could report to the king in 1360 on the anger of many of the townsfolk caused by the destruction of houses and gardens for the extension of the town's defences.²

It must thus be borne in mind that in matters of fortification there was no general hard and fast rule applicable to the country as a whole.

Nevertheless, although extent and nature of building might differ in the various parts of the country at various times, it is true to say that fortification was in progress in England throughout the whole of the period. In France, too, where the French were fighting a primarily defensive war, a spur was given to the construction of fortifications and the upkeep of existing ones.³ The needs of defence in England also gave an incentive to the construction and upkeep of fortifications: periods of increased concern for fortifications acted as a barometer by which the fortunes of war could be judged. As Dr. Turner points out, building activity tended to increase noticeably in times of crisis, as reflected in the greater incidence of murage grants, of royal writs concerned with fortifications, and in the more frequent appointments of commissions to inspect fortifications.

1. Rot. Parl., ii. 312.

2. C.I.M., 1348-77, pp. 154-5, no. 425.

3. P. Contamine, Guerre, État et Société, pp. 5-9;
C. L. H. Coulson, 'Seignorial Fortresses in France in relation to Public Policy, c.864 to c.1483' (Ph.D., London, 1972), pp. 97-8.

Within the confines of the period covered by this study, there were two main periods of concern for fortifications which coincided with periods of threat from abroad. The late 1330s saw a spate of building, which was paralleled in the 1370s and 1380s. One may add here that the decade of peace during the 1360s was also a period of fortress-construction, perhaps as a precaution against a possible renewal of war with the French. But the late 1330s and the 1370s and 1380s were both crisis periods which had much in common with each other: from 1337 to 1340 and from 1369 to 1380 in particular, the English coasts were subjected to frequent and damaging enemy attacks, which resulted in fear and discontent in England.

The outbreak of open war between England and France was accompanied almost immediately by French attacks upon the coast. The descents upon Portsmouth and Southampton in 1338 were bad enough in themselves, but what was worse was that at this early stage, the future course of the war was uncertain. Were such powerful attacks to be a foretaste of worse evils to come? Certainly many Englishmen thought so and so did foreign observers. In 1338, the scales of fortune seemed to be heavily tipped in favour of France, the leading state of Western chivalry, rather than in that of the English, regarded by some as 'the most timid of the barbarians'.¹ On paper, this indeed seemed the case: Philip VI of France had, since 1335, been assembling a large fleet in the ports of Normandy, which could

1. Petrarch, quoted in B. H. St. J. O'Neil, Castles and Cannon. A Study of Early Artillery Fortifications in England (Oxford, 1960), p. 2.

have been employed in an attack on England.¹ When war broke out, the threat, manifested in the widespread raids on the south coast in 1338, became a reality. It is clear that these raids heightened any sense of danger in English minds, and firmly underlined the need for the construction of fixed defences, particularly at important places such as Southampton, many of which were incompletely walled.

As early as 1335 works were in progress at places on the south coast. The menace of the French fleet together with actual Scottish naval raids evidently lay behind these. At Carisbrooke in the Isle of Wight, works began on a new gate to the castle, and continued until 1341, when they were stated to have totalled £433.² At Southampton in 1336, the burgesses expressed a wish to replace their wooden barbican on the sea-ward side of the town, built in the reign of Edward II, with a stronger one of stone. For this purpose, the king granted them the right to levy barbicanage for five years.³ Following the attack on the town in 1338, an inquisition into its defences was held by the earl of Arundel in October,⁴ and an attempt was made in the following year to rectify defects by the arrest of workmen to enclose the town with walls.⁵ Other south coastal towns were also caught up in a wave of similar building activity. Exeter, for example, received in 1338 its first grant of murage

1. See above, p. 4.

2. P.R.O., S.C.6/987/1.

3. C.P.R., 1334-8, p. 240.

4. C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 180.

5. C.C.R., 1339-41, p. 55. See also Appendix 4.

for almost forty years,¹ and this grant was renewed in each of the following three years.² Extensive building work was carried out in the city until 1343.³ In October 1338 Nicholas le Devenysshe, the mayor of Winchester was empowered to levy in the city as much money as required to repair the city walls and put the city in a state of defence as further French attacks were expected. Works were in hand there throughout 1339, and attention was paid even to the royal castle. The defences of other south coastal towns such as Chichester and Hastings were also attended to.⁴

Activity in these years was not merely confined to towns on the south coast. In July 1338, the burgesses of King's Lynn were given custody of the town, with power to levy a subsidy there for its defence.⁵ In 1337 and 1338 £51 4s. 7d. was spent on repairs to the town's earthworks⁶ and in 1338 and 1339 a further £80 6s. 9½d. was spent on the fortifications there⁷ - considerable sums in both cases. In 1338, Harwich and Melcombe received murage grants.⁸

1. C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 156. The previous grant had been made in 1300 (C.P.R., 1292-1301, p. 512).

2. C.P.R., 1340-3, pp. 44, 335, 562.

3. Exeter City R.O., Miscellaneous Roll 6, mm. 22, 22^v. Between November 1341 and Martinmas 1342 a total of £27 2s. ¾d. was spent on the city walls, gates, towers and 'barbigan'. Receipts of murage for the same period amounted to £31 19s. 4d. After 1343, the account rolls show minor expenditure on repairs.

4. C.P.R., 1338-40, pp. 180, 212, 246, 258, 272, 281.

5. C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 110.

6. T. P. Smith, 'The Medieval Town Defences of King's Lynn', Journal of the British Archaeological Association, 3rd series, xxxiii (1970), 73.

7. Turner, Town Defences, p. 129.

8. C.P.R., 1338-40, pp. 63 (Melcombe), 88 (Harwich).

In addition to the fortification of towns, many royal and private castles sited at important positions on the coast underwent repairs during the later 1330s. At Portchester in 1335-6 and 1336-7, for example, the sheriff of Hampshire was instructed to spend £20 on repairs to the buildings, bretaches and armoury. The constable, Richard, earl of Arundel, received a further £20 in 1336-7 for works on the wall walk, towers and dock.¹ On the east coast, Scarborough castle, described as dilapidated in 1330,² underwent repairs and renovations costing £74.³ The principal works carried out at this time were on the new stone bridgeway leading to the barbican, both of which were completed by 1343.⁴ In the same period, however, Corfe Castle, barring the only gap in the Purbeck Hills had only scant repairs carried out,⁵ and a similar state of affairs prevailed at Queen Philippa's castle of Pevensey on the Sussex coast.⁶

Interest in fortifications was not just the prerogative of crown and commune: private individuals also showed concern. Existing castles were, in many cases, strengthened. The barbican at Lewes castle dates from the closing years of the 1330s,⁷ and many monastic sites near the coast underwent fortification during this period. In 1338, the abbot of Battle received a licence to crenellate a gate for the protection of his abbey, the works probably being completed in the following year,⁸ while in 1340,

1. History of the King's Works, ii. 788.

2. P.R.O., C.145/114/10; C.145/110/31; C.145/148/8.

3. P.R.O., E.101/482/4.

4. Scarborough Castle (London, 1957), p. 2.

5. History of the King's Works, ii. 622.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 779.

7. W. H. Godfrey, Lewes Castle (Lewes, 1970), pp. 2, 14, 16-18.

8. V. C. H., Sussex, ii. 54; C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 92.

the bishop of Bath and Wells received licence 'to build a wall round the churchyard and precinct of the houses of him and his canons, and to crenellate and make towers in such a wall.'¹

The spate of building produced by the attacks of the 1330s continued into the 1340s. At Norwich, there was a great deal of work carried out on the city walls between 1342 and 1344. Murage had been granted for a period of five years in 1337, and was renewed for a further seven years in 1343 so that a dyke could be built to protect the wall built from the proceeds of the earlier murage grant.² In 1342, springalds were provided for the defence of the walls.³ The early 1340s also witnessed a number of licences to crenellate dwellings near the coast. In 1340, for example, such licences were granted for the crenellation of manor houses at Torrington and Bere Ferrers in Devonshire,⁴ and the burgesses of Southampton were granted in 1341 a five-year extension of the right to levy barbicanage for their new stone barbican.⁵

1. C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 466.

2. C.P.R., 1334-8, p. 529; C.P.R., 1343-5, p. 149. The walls of Norwich had been begun in 1294, and erection of the circuit took about fifteen years. Works on the walls, however, continued throughout the fourteenth century, and they appear to have been finally completed by 1378. From this date, expenditure was only on maintenance and repairs (R. Howlett, 'Norwich Artillery in the Fourteenth Century', Norfolk Archaeology, xvi (1907), 47; Turner, Town Defences, pp. 137-8).

3. These were a gift of a prominent citizen, Richard Spynk (F. Blomefield, A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk (11 vols., Norwich, 1805-10), iii. 71, cited in Howlett, 'Norwich Artillery in the Fourteenth Century', p. 47).

4. C.P.R., 1340-3, pp. 39, 51.

5. Ibid., p. 136.

As the 1340s wore on, however, interest in fortifications waned. The authorities were still concerned about the safety of places such as Portsmouth: in 1342, the town received a grant of murage for five years.¹ It is doubtful whether any building was commenced as a result of this grant, which had only raised 40s. by 1344, when the townsfolk petitioned for its annulment.² Enthusiasm over the fortifications of Southampton seems also to have waned, since in July 1341 a commission of Oyer and Teminer was appointed to investigate the misappropriation of moneys missing from the grant of barbicanage made earlier in the year.³

Generally speaking the later 1340s saw an increased disinterest in fixed fortifications. Many places were allowed to fall into a state of neglect, while at others only repairs of a minor order were carried out. Rochester, for example, had had its city walls repaired and even extended in 1344,⁴ but by 1355, an inquiry into the state of the defences of the castle showed it to be in a very sorry state of repair.⁵ Nevertheless, little was done there until 1367, and the works then continued until 1370.⁶

By the 1350s there was an even plainer decline in building in fortifications on a large scale. Windsor castle, where an extensive programme of building works was in progress from 1350

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1. Ibid., pp. 562-3.
 2. Ibid., p. 322.
 3. Ibid., p. 311.
 4. C.P.R., 1343-5, pp. 262, 359.
 5. C.P.R., 1354-8, p. 300.
 6. H.K.W., ii. 811-12.

onwards, was an exception, although much of this work was of a domestic nature.¹ Elsewhere, such activity as there was also took, in many cases, the form of domestic repairs, as at the castles of Corfe and Portchester in 1356-7,² although, as mentioned above, constant works of repair were carried out on the wall of Winchester throughout the 1350s.³ However, while in 1355 Southampton received a grant of murage for ten years to complete the enclosure of the town⁴ -- a measure probably provoked by the threat of French attack during the same year --, Ipswich had its licence to crenellate of 1352 revoked in 1354 because nothing was being done there,⁵ and Totnes yielded up its murage grant of 1355 for the same reason.⁶ Evidently, the lessening of the threat of French attack during this decade lay behind the declining concern for fortifications.

Nevertheless, whenever enemy attacks threatened, it was usual for run-down fortifications to undergo repairs and to be put in states of readiness to repel any attacks. This was apparent during the invasion crisis period of 1359-60, when it was believed that French intentions were to rescue their king and nobles held captive in England. At numerous castles around

1. Ibid., pp. 870-8.

2. Ibid., pp. 616, 788-9.

3. See above, p. 237.

4. C.P.R., 1354-8, p. 254; The Charters of Southampton, ed. H. W. Gidden (2 vols., Southampton Record Society, 1909-10), i. 22-5; The Oak Book of Southampton, ed. P. Studer (3 vols., Southampton Record Society, 1912-15), ii. 118-21.

5. C.P.R., 1350-4, p. 314; C.P.R., 1354-8, p. 144.

6. C.P.R., 1354-8, p. 243.

the coasts, instructions were issued for surveys into their defects and for any necessary repairs to be put in hand. The castles of Leeds, in Kent, Hadleigh, Dover, Corfe, Gloucester and Bristol were among many places where such activity was carried out.¹ At Hastings, Pevensey and Old Sarum the strengthening of the garrisons was provided for,² while Berkhamsted castle in Hertfordshire was strengthened to safely accommodate the French King.³ As the danger passed, so there was a decline in such activity.

But the decade following the Peace of Brétigny witnessed new developments in fortifications; increased building activity was evident, particularly in the construction of new fortresses, a pattern to be followed in the succeeding two decades. Two major royal works were conceived and begun during the 1360s: at Hadleigh castle in Essex and at Queenborough castle in Kent.

Between 1360 and 1370, over £2,000 was spent on extensive rebuilding at Hadleigh, the works being chiefly concerned with the curtain wall and the defences of the entrance.⁴ Edward III indeed wished to turn the castle into a fitting royal residence,

1. For these fortresses and many others; see C.P.R., 1359-61, pp. 187, 191, 247, 330, 337, 339, etc.; C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 9, 14, 15, 16, etc.

2. C.P.R., 1358-61, pp. 411, 414; C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 9, 15-16, 34.

3. C.P.R., 1358-61, p. 341.

4. H.K.W., ii. 662-6; P. L. Drewett, 'Excavations at Hadleigh Castle, Essex, 1971-2', Journal of the British Archaeological Association, 3rd series, xxxviii (1975), 90-154.

but military reasons also prevailed. The two massive drum-towers built on the eastern side and visible from the estuary below were clearly intended as a show of strength, while the construction of a barbican made the castle far stronger than before.

At Queenborough, on the Isle of Sheppey, works began in 1361 on a completely new castle. Between 1361 and 1375, an estimated round total of £25,000 was spent on the construction of the castle. While, as in the case of Hadleigh, Edward III intended the castle to be a royal residence, its military importance is undeniable. From its situation at the northern entrance to the Swale -- the channel between the Isle of Sheppey and the mainland, which was the usual passage for shipping in the fourteenth century -- it is clear that the castle was primarily intended as an important link in the defences of the approaches to the Thames estuary.¹ Extensive repairs were also put in hand at Dover, at the castle, between 1361-4 and in the town from 1365.² The ditches and walls of Canterbury also underwent repair.³

A striking aspect of this building programme is that all these places were situated in the south-east, an area which provided a natural target for enemy naval attacks. The flat coastal plain had many landing places, and the terrain provided no natural barriers to penetration inland as far as the Thames.

1. H.K.W., ii. 798-803. See Map 4, following p. 219.

2. P.R.O., E.101/462/20-22, 45; C.P.R., 1361-4, pp. 251, 405; C.P.R., 1364-7, p. 320; C.C.R., 1360-4, p. 237.

3. C.P.R., 1361-4, p. 373.

The Thames and Medway, moreover, formed convenient natural routeways into the heart of the south-eastern region and were a threat to London itself. The crown, perhaps warned by the events of 1359-60, and perhaps aware of the increasing strength of the French monarchy in the 1360s, was taking no chances in the event of a renewal of war. Hence this extensive peace-time building programme. Works were also carried out during the 1360s in other areas: at the inland castle of Wallingford, works on the keep and defences amounted to £500 between 1363 and 1367.¹ At coastal fortresses, from Llanstephan in Carmarthenshire to Scarborough, works were in progress during the 1360s, but the major capital building of the decade was concentrated in the south-east.

An accompaniment to the continuation of war in 1370s and 1380s was a marked increase in defensive building activity. The second phase of war increasingly saw the construction of complete new fortifications. Licences to crenellate new castles were granted for Farleigh Hungerford in Somerset in 1370² and Nunney, in 1373, while substantial works on the town walls at Canterbury began in 1378.³ In 1380 the West Gate at Canterbury,

1. Register of Edward the Black Prince (4 vols., 1930-3), iv. 502, 542, 562.

2. Farleigh Hungerford castle (Somerset), begun in 1370 and completed by 1380 appears to have been built without licence, its builder, Sir Thomas de Hungerford, was pardoned for so doing in November 1383 (C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 134; Farleigh Hungerford Castle (London, 1963), p. 2).

3. C.P.R., 1370-4, p. 367 (Nunney); C.P.R., 1377-81, pp. 274, 370; Rot. Parl., iii. 53 (Canterbury).

a fortress in itself, was erected at the expense of Simon Sudbury.¹ The construction of new castles was undertaken at Cooling in Kent (1381), Donnington in Berkshire (1386), Bodiam in Sussex (1386), and at Dartmouth (1388).²

Many of the fortified buildings erected after 1369 were undertaken by private individuals. The crown may have been responsible for the expense of building 'the new tower' and other defences at Southampton between 1376 and 1388,³ but the construction at Bodiam was undertaken by Sir Edward Dalyngrigge, those at Cooling by John de Cobham, those at Dartmouth by the townsfolk. The shift of direction from royal building to private was perhaps aided by the royal permission to fortify at will granted in the parliament of 1371 in response to a petition of the commons 'en salvation et en defense de son Roialme, granter et establir...qe chescun home par tout Engleterre puisse faire Fort, ou Forteresce, et Murs et Tours Kernelles ou batailles, a sa franche volounte'.⁴ This demand was certainly a result of the prolonged and increased French menace. People wished to protect themselves, since many believed that the crown could no longer effectively do so. The structures on the east coast were

1. C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 450; C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 8; O'Neil, Castles and Cannon, pp. 8-9; J. H. Harvey, Henry Yevele, c. 1320-1400: the Life of an English Architect (London, 1944, rev. ed. 1946), pp. 36-8.

2. C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 596 (Cooling); C.P.R., 1385-9, p. 156 (Donnington); C.P.R., 1385-9, pp. 42, 98 (Bodiam); A. D. Saunders, Dartmouth Castle (London, 1965), p. 8 (Dartmouth).

3. H.K.W., ii. 842-4.

4. Rot. Parl., ii. 307. The petition that towns be granted the same freedom to fortify was rejected.

undoubtedly the reaction to insecurity in that region ensuing from the decline of English fortunes in the war. The other possibility is that many of the fortresses built in the 1380s were erected with the troubles of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 in mind. At Cooling, however, to allay such fears, a plaque above the outer gate categorically states the castle's main role:

'Knowyth that beth and schul be
That I am made in help of the cuntre...'¹

Despite the fact that the 1370s and 1380s saw increased involvement with fortifications, the numbers of licences to crenellate paradoxically did not increase. Compared to 141 such licences granted by Edward III, the reign of Richard II saw a total of only fifty-two such grants, not a very marked average annual increase.²

Looking at the pattern of building during the 1370s and 1380s, one sees two distinct groups of fortresses emerge. One would not deny that the fortresses built at or near the coast were intended to serve as aids to national defence, or that they evolved as a result of setbacks in the war. But the period saw the construction of new castles in inland areas, mainly in the counties of the south Midlands and the west. Donnington, Farleigh Hungerford and Nunney, for example, were all situated some distance inland from the south coast. But because of their siting, in an area apparently unconnected with the enemy threat to the coast, and because of the supposed thinness of their

1. See Harvey, Henry Yevele, p. 39.

2. This statement is based upon the evidence of the Calendar of Patent Rolls.

walls, their strategic importance has been overlooked by historians, and their military value underestimated. Nunney, for instance, has been seen as a tower house built to satisfy the nostalgic dreams of an old soldier.¹ By the building standards of the reign of Edward I, the walls of these inland fortresses were indeed thin -- Caernarvon castle's walls are 16 ft. thick in places, while those of Nunney average 7 ft. in thickness. The tendency in the fourteenth century was, however, generally towards the building of walls thinner than the massive ones of the Edwardian castles. Furthermore, in the Civil War of the seventeenth century, each of these inland castles withstood for protracted periods bombardments from artillery far more powerful than any artillery of the fourteenth century. Even an unfortified building garrisoned with armed troops proves a difficult obstacle to overcome, and each of the fortresses in question, well equipped with flanking towers, machicolations, and other defensive refinements would be a far tougher nut to crack. To say then that such sites were indefensible is nonsense.

A possible reason for their erection lay in the course of the war after 1369. It is clear from central government records that the authorities, influenced by the enormous increase in Franco-Castilian raids, genuinely believed that an invasion of England was possible. An invasion would involve the penetration of an enemy force deep into the inland districts, as opposed to more raids which would concentrate in the coastal areas.

1. Sir John de la Mare, who is presumed to have seen active service in France, a fact to which is attributed the reason for the castle's French appearance (S. E. Rigold, Nunney Castle (London, 1957), p. 4).

Erection of such fortresses, although by private enterprise, may have been undertaken to ensure the security of inland areas. Donnington, for instance, acted as a blockhouse astride the cross-roads of the main road leading north from the south coast and the main road west from London. Nunney and Farleigh Hungerford were obstacles to penetration inland from the south-west coast. The crown, in fact, itself attended to the strengthening of royal inland castles. Extensive repairs were carried out at Gloucester castle from 1379 onwards, while Wallingford, guarding an important crossing-point on the upper reaches of the Thames underwent works in 1389-90.¹

Apart from capital building works and long-term programmes of maintenance of walls, in many coastal places, at castles and, more especially, towns, attention was paid to the fortifications only in times of crisis. In some cases the works were undertaken on local initiative: this was the case at Hull in 1377 and at Dartmouth in 1388.² But more frequently, a royal order commanding that the town or castle be put into good order was needed before any action was taken. Such was the case at Dartmouth and Exeter in 1377.³ Owners of private castles also frequently received such commands. In 1372, for instance, the bishop of St. Davids was ordered to repair his Welsh castles and to provide them with supplies and

1. C.P.R., 1377-81, pp. 12, 345; C.P.R., 1389-92, p. 126 (Gloucester); P.R.O., E.101/490/1, 4; C.P.R., 1368-92, pp. 145-6 (Wallingford).

2. C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 58 (Hull); C.C.R., 1385-9, p. 537 (Dartmouth).

3. C.P.R., 1374-77, pp. 476, 486.

munitions.¹ In 1377, the lords of other Pembrokeshire castles received like instructions, as did the constables of the royal castles of Corfe, Hadleigh, Portchester and Somerton.²

Periods of crisis were also reflected in the noticeable increases in the size of garrisons. In 1380, for example, Corfe castle's usual garrison of four men-at-arms and sixteen armed men was strengthened by an additional 'xij ville de Corfe vigilantes in castro'.³ Threats of attack in 1381, 1383 and 1385 brought with them royal orders for the constable, Robert Baerdolph, to take extra men as necessary to swell the number of defenders.⁴ In August 1369, Warin de l'Isle's Portsmouth garrison of fifteen knights, twenty-seven esquires, and fifty-three archers was reinforced by a further 120 armed men and 220 archers.⁵ The Issue Rolls for the troubled year of 1377 make repeated reference to twelve Genoese crossbowmen augmenting the garrison of Dover castle.⁶

The increased activity in fortifications resulting from the French attacks of the fourteenth century brought about a

1. C.P.R., 1370-4, p. 238.

2. C.P.R., 1374-7, pp. 435, 473, 477, 479, 495, 501; C.C.R., 1374-7, p. 487.

3. P.R.O., E.364/14, m.10.

4. P.R.O., E.364/18, m.1; E.364/19, m.3; C.P.R., 1381-5, pp. 16, 543.

5. P.R.O., E.364/3, mm. 4^v, 5^v; E.364/6, m. 5.

6. P.R.O., E.403/462, m. 8; E.403/463, mm. 1, 4; E.403/464, m. 1; E.403/467, m.2.

number of effects. Many towns were fortified for the first time; places which were already fortified were strengthened and their defences extended, and improvements took place in the actual techniques of fortification. Existing gateways were more strongly protected with the construction of new gatehouses, as at Carisbrooke castle (c. 1335) and Saltwood castle (1383), or by barbicans, such as those at the castles of Lewes (late 1330s), Scarborough (1343), and Tynemouth (1390). Some of these structures, such as the West Gate at Canterbury (1380), and the castles of Cooling (1381) and Bodiam (1386), were built with gunports for use with artillery. Elsewhere, existing fortifications had gunports inserted: the West Gate at Winchester, refaced in the late fourteenth century, was furnished at the time with two gun-ports¹; at Carisbrooke castle in 1380, gunports were inserted into the gatehouse built forty-five years earlier²; the embrasures for guns at Southampton are well known.³ Absence of gunports does not, however, mean that guns were not in use in the town or castle in question. At Norwich, where no gunports of fourteenth-century date exist, it is known that the town walls were well defended in 1386 with fifty-eight guns, of calibres varying from twelve inches to twenty inches.⁴

1. F. Cottrill, The Westgate, Winchester (Winchester, 1969), p. 1; O'Neil, Castles and Cannon, p. 17.

2. O'Neil ascribes the construction of these gunports to Anthony Wydeville, Lord Scales, who held the castle between 1467-83 (op. cit., pp. 35-6). For a revised, and more accurate dating, see H.K.W., ii. 594.

3. O'Neil, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

4. Howlett, 'Norwich Artillery in the Fourteenth Century', pp. 63-7. It is interesting to note that in the 1340s, springalds were the principal form of artillery in the town (ibid., p. 47).

Although guns were coming into use with fortifications from the 1360s onwards, engines, such as the mangonel, balista and springald had been used for the defence of fortifications for centuries. Such engines continued in use throughout the fourteenth century, at first on their own, and later in conjunction with guns. The evidence of developments in Southampton provides a good example of the general trend. In the 1330s and 1340s, the town's armaments included 'springaldos', 'ingeniis' and 'machinarum'.¹ As late as 1360, the keeper of the town was given full control of all 'ingena, springaldos et alia attileria'.² In 1377, eight 'canonatorum' and two 'machinatorum' are recorded as being in the town, evidence that cannon were already outnumbering stone-throwing artillery.³ But engines were not entirely superseded: in 1386 'canones, baliste, ... et alias artillerias' appear in the town's arsenal.⁴ This was by no means unusual: the account of John Warbilton at Rye in 1386-7 recorded payments to a 'canonatoris' and an 'enginatoris', while in the same year, 'artilleria et armaturum' were brought from London to Dover castle.⁵

Besides fortifications of stone, defences constructed of other materials were also used. Earthworks, timber construc-

1. P.R.O., C.76/15, m. 31; E.403/307, m. 1; C.P.R., 1339-41, pp. 64, 82, 83, 135, 185, 215.

2. Foedera, III. i. 481.

3. P.R.O., E.364/467, m. 7; E.403/467, m.7.

4. P.R.O., E.403/512, m. 3.

5. P.R.O., E.364/22, m.2^v; E.403/512, m. 21.

tions, or a combination of both had been known in England for several centuries and were certainly used in the fourteenth century, if only as temporary defences. Walsingham, for instance, records how, in 1386, the prefabricated palisades of the captured French invasion fort were incorporated in the defences of Sandwich, which had, to that date, consisted merely of an earthen bank and ditch.¹ Sandwich was by no means unique in having earth defences. It appears that a substantial proportion of the defences of Southampton until the 1330's consisted of an earthen bank.² Winchelsea also depended chiefly on an earth bank and ditch, although it did have stone gateways, and it seems that Portsmouth was defended only by an earth wall and palisade.³ Such primitive defences explain in part the success of several French attacks on those towns.

In addition to permanent defences of earth or wood, it seems highly likely that temporary fortifications of similar construction might be erected in times of acute danger, or of other necessity. (The French, as the Normans before them had done, intended to erect a temporary wooden fortification to secure their beach-head in the event of a successful landing in 1386).

1. Walsingham, Ypod. Neust., p. 348. Within the earthwork enceinte of fourteenth-century Sandwich were five gates of masonry, one of which was further protected by a wooden barbican (Turner, Town Defences, p. 164).

2. On the earthen defences of Southampton see D. M. Wilson and J. G. Hurst, 'Medieval Britain in 1957: ii.E, Hampshire: Southampton', Medieval Archaeology, ii (1958), 198-9.

3. Ieland, Itinerary, i. 238.

In 1338, for example, the citizens of London were ordered to make temporary defences along the banks of the Thames with stone and boards.¹ Improvised defences such as that used by English troops in the Calais March in 1347 involving wine tuns filled with stones -- the medieval equivalent of the sandbag -- could also have been used to form temporary defensive walls.² They were certainly used in conjunction with beacons.³ The heavily-armed band of miscreants who captured the abbot of Dorchester's Oxfordshire manor of Huntercombe in 1375 fortified it 'modo guerrino cum fossatis, haiis, hurdys et schafaldes fortalicium fecerunt' and stayed there for a fortnight threatening the countryside around.⁴

Obstacles of wood and other materials were sometimes placed in navigable rivers to prevent the incursion of an enemy. This was especially the case in the late 1330s and 1370s. On rivers such as the Exe, which was barred by numerous weirs, no

1. C.C.R., 1337-9, p. 612.

2. Baker, p. 92. Baker relates how the English after the capture of Marck and Oye '... in illis cum magna difficultate edificaverunt fortalicia, positis secundum ordinem, ubi nunc sunt muri in circuitu doleis vino vacuatis set lapidibus repletis, ut starent pro muro contra hostes.'

3. Hewitt, The Organization of War under Edward III, p. 5.

4. Select Cases in the Court of King's Bench, ed. Sayles (Selden Soc., 1965), vi. 175-6, no. 119. The band, numbering about forty, and including some Scots, were extremely well provided with body armour, and some even carried guns.

such steps were necessary¹ -- the weirs which cut off Exeter from the sea also prevented penetration of French ships as far as the town -- but on rivers like the Thames, other means had to be found. In 1338, for example, the government, confronted with the distinct possibility of an enemy attack on London, for which the attacks on Southampton and the South Coast had been a grim harbinger, issued orders that wooden piles be placed in the Thames.² Such measures could, of course, be only temporary expedients -- the immediate reaction to imminent threats. Long-term use of piles in the Thames would be an obstacle to friendly shipping and, consequently, trade would suffer.³ More convenient was the use of chains across the river or harbour mouth, which could be lowered to permit passage of friendly vessels, but which could be raised to form a barrier against enemies. Evidence reveals the use of chains at several ports, and the practice was probably quite widespread. At York the chain stretched from the riverside Lendal Tower to the North Street Postern Tower on the opposite bank of the Ouse to prevent enemy ships sailing into the city.⁴ The harbour of

1. The statutes of 25 Edward III, stat. 3, cap. 4, and 45 Edward III, cap. 2. (Stats. Realm, i. 315, 393), however, declared that weirs constructed since the reign of Edward I were to be pulled down. Economic and social reasons lay behind such measures: the weirs which formed defences against sea-borne enemy attacks also obstructed trade, and were therefore unpopular.

2. C.C.R., 1337-9, p. 612.

3. Indeed, in 1339 the citizens of London petitioned the king that the palings fixed across the Thames and an 'embattled house' built to protect the city be demolished, as trade was affected. The king agreed that this would be done as soon as peace was restored (C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 172).

4. A. L. Laishley & J. Brown, Guide to York (n.d.), p. 26; An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the City of York: ii. The Defences (London, 1972), pp. 13, 17, 18, 21, 36, 46, 106, 108, 158.

Great Yarmouth was protected with a chain,¹ and boom defences occurred in other ports such as Dartmouth and on the river Medway.² In 1369 the commons in parliament petitioned that for the defence of towns on the arms of the sea 'pales, cheynes mette et autres instrumentz' be erected.³

In addition to such temporary measures taken only in times of danger, structures normally used in peace time could be adapted for purposes of defence. Around the coasts of England, particularly in low-lying areas or where land had been reclaimed from the sea, were numerous dykes, ditches and breakwaters, designed as defences against the ravages of the sea. Many, such as those of Romney Marsh, had been in existence since Roman times. Such was the importance of these works, that the regulation of their maintenance was provided for by officials appointed to commissions de walliis et fossatis. If such dykes formed barriers against the incursions of the sea, they could also form

1. C.C.R., 1385-9, p. 175. In September 1386, all ships in South Yarmouth and Gorleston were ordered to repair to Great Yarmouth 'to be kept safe within the chains of that port during the period which threatens from the king's enemies'.

2. On the boom defences of some of these other ports, see A. D. Saunders, Dartmouth Castle (London, 1965), p. 13. Against a large vessel, however, a chain would be of little use. In 1667 the Dutch fleet made short work of the defensive chain across the Medway (P. G. Rogers, The Dutch in the Medway (Oxford, 1970), p. 95). A variation of the use of chains was for ships to be chained together to form a barrier as in the well-known case of the French fleet at Sluys in 1340, although I have found no examples of the English employing such a tactic. The River Medway had temporary obstructions in it under or near Rochester bridge. In 1356, Geoffrey de Say, the constable of Rochester castle was instructed to remove the obstructions in the river at the bridge so that cargoes of timber and stone for the works at the Palace of Westminster could pass along the river (Foedera, III. i. 331).

3. Rot. Parl., ii. 301. But cf. the complaint in the Parliament of 1372 against the use of pales in the river Avon between Bath and Bristol (*ibid.*, ii. 312).

Great Yarmouth was protected with a chain,¹ and boom defences occurred in other ports such as Dartmouth and on the river Medway.² In 1369 the commons in parliament petitioned that for the defence of towns on the arms of the sea 'pales, cheynes mettre et autres instrumentz' be erected.³

In addition to such temporary measures taken only in times of danger, structures normally used in peace time could be adapted for purposes of defence. Around the coasts of England, particularly in low-lying areas or where land had been reclaimed from the sea, were numerous dykes, ditches and breakwaters, designed as defences against the ravages of the sea. Many, such as those of Romney Marsh, had been in existence since Roman times. Such was the importance of these works, that the regulation of their maintenance was provided for by officials appointed to commissions de walliis et fossatis. If such dykes formed barriers against the incursions of the sea, they could also form

1. C.C.R., 1385-9, p. 175. In September 1386, all ships in South Yarmouth and Gorleston were ordered to repair to Great Yarmouth 'to be kept safe within the chains of that port during the period which threatens from the king's enemies'.

2. On the boom defences of some of these other ports, see A. D. Saunders, Dartmouth Castle (London, 1965), p. 13. Against a large vessel, however, a chain would be of little use. In 1667 the Dutch fleet made short work of the defensive chain across the Medway (P. G. Rogers, The Dutch in the Medway (Oxford, 1970), p. 95). A variation of the use of chains was for ships to be chained together to form a barrier as in the well-known case of the French fleet at Sluys in 1340, although I have found no examples of the English employing such a tactic. The River Medway had temporary obstructions in it under or near Rochester bridge. In 1356, Geoffrey de Say, the constable of Rochester castle was instructed to remove the obstructions in the river at the bridge so that cargoes of timber and stone for the works at the Palace of Westminster could pass along the river (Foedera, III. i. 331).

3. Rot. Parl., ii. 301. But cf. the complaint in the Parliament of 1372 against the use of pales in the river Avon between Bath and Bristol (*ibid.*, ii. 312).

formidable obstacles to the landing of an enemy.¹ Direct evidence that the dykes were actually used in this second way is slight, but from the few specific references which do occur, it appears that such sea defences were indeed, in certain localities at least, also utilized for the purposes of national security. In January 1369, the keepers of the Isle of Wight were commissioned to arrange for the island's defence, with the usual instructions to array all fencible men, and to prevent people from leaving the island. Moreover, they were to ensure that all places where ships could land were fortified and to strengthen all sea-walls and dykes.² In the following year, contained within a series of commissions de walliis et fossatis was an order to Roger Dalyngrugge and his companions to find those responsible for cleaning the dyke at Cuckmere Haven in Sussex, 'which has so long been obstructed so that very many losses have happened there by incursions of the king's enemies', and to compel them to clean it.³ In 1380, the king ordered a survey to be made in the Kentish hundreds of Hoo, Shenley and Toltingtrow, and for their coastlines along the river Thames to be fortified by the erection of piles and the repair of the dykes.⁴ A similar commission was issued regarding the same

1. For a comprehensive account of the workings of sea-dykes and the methods of construction see R. A. L. Smith, Canterbury Cathedral Priory. (Cambridge, 1943), pp. 166-89; R. A. L. Smith, 'Marsh Embankment and Sea Defence in Medieval Kent', Ec.H.R., x (1940), 29-37.

2. C.P.R., 1367-70, p. 189.

3. Ibid., p. 420.

4. C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 577. See also Map 4: the defences of the Thames estuary in the 1370s and 1380s. The southern bank of the Thames from the mouth of the Medway to Southwark is mostly low-lying and was (and still is) protected by dykes along its length.

hundreds in 1381. On this occasion, a survey was to be made in all ports where ships could enter, trenches were to be dug and piles erected.¹

Despite the scarcity of direct evidence, there certainly seems to have been a link between these works erected primarily for sea-defence and the system of national defence. A substantial increase in the number of commissions issued in years of acute danger would corroborate this hypothesis beyond doubt. Unfortunately, this was not the case, although an increase in the number of such commissions may be discerned in the 1370s. In 1370, nine commissions were issued, mainly covering the coasts of South East England.² 1374 saw thirteen commissions de walliis et fossatis, of which eleven may have been of some strategic value, and one of which specifically ordered the impressment of carpenters and other workmen to repair the dykes in Kent and Sussex.³ If, however, the dykes and ditches were indeed used in the national system of defence, the defenders would have had a ready-made system of fortifications which stretched along almost the entire length of the east and south coasts and along navigable rivers, and the successful landing of a sea-borne enemy would have been rendered more difficult.

Throughout the fourteenth century, fortifications played an important role in national defence. The commons describing fortresses in 1377 as the 'cliefs' of the kingdom were rightly recognizing their importance.⁴

1. Ibid., p. 629. See Map 4, following p. 219.

2. C.P.R., 1367-70, p. 420.

3. C.P.R., 1370-4, pp. 473-4.

4. Rot. Parl., iii. 16-17. In this parliament it was also agreed that keepers of fortresses were to be able men, and that those who surrendered castles or towns should be responsible for their actions to parliament.

The long-term need for defence witnessed developments in the science of fortification. Such developments, such as the provision of loops for artillery and refinements such as separate quarters for the garrisons of castles, were not the result of the defensive reaction to the enemy threat. The science of fortification was developing naturally during the course of the century. But the fact that the latest developments in fortress-building were employed in England during the period is strong testimony to the importance attached to fortified sites.

The needs of a building programme over a long period placed heavy burdens upon the crown and the local communities, and by the 1370s complaints were becoming commonplace.¹ This was hardly surprising, particularly since by the latter part of the century each instance of enemy threat was accompanied by feverish building activity in many coastal places. The year 1379-80 and 1385-6 witnessed particularly intensive building activity, as a glance through the Patent and Close Roll entries for these years will reveal.

Despite complaints, it is clear that the fortified place played a large and important role in the system of defence in fourteenth-century England.

1. E.g., Rot. Parl., iii. 20, 53; C.C.R., 1381-5, pp. 519-20.

CHAPTER TEN

NAVAL DEFENCE

Since England was largely surrounded by the sea, shipping had always an important role to play in the life of the realm during the Middle Ages. Ships were necessary for any contact with the continent: in economic affairs both for trading with the wool-markets of Flanders and the wine-producing regions of Gascony; for communications with the English territories in Ireland, the Channel Islands, Gascony and fortresses in France; while in war-time shipping was a necessary medium for transporting armies to the continent, to Scotland and Ireland, and for supplying them once in the field. But if shipping were necessary to the English war-effort, the French and their allies also had need of ships to bring the war to English soil and to attack English shipping at sea. Naval war was indeed only a short step removed from the normal state of quasi-piracy which always existed, and, consequently, the sea was important to both sides during the Hundred Years' War.

There has been controversy over which of the two sides -- the attackers or the defenders -- had the advantage in medieval naval warfare, and many modern historians have ascribed the advantage to the

defenders. It is clear, however, from the events of fourteenth-century naval warfare, that during this period most of the advantages lay with the attackers. Once at sea, a fleet could move with comparative secrecy. The English might send spies to enemy ports to witness French naval preparations, and spy ships were often sent to sea to monitor the movements of the enemy fleet¹, but the advantages still lay with the attackers once they were on the open sea. The pattern of English writs for defence often makes it all too clear that once an enemy fleet was at sea, the English authorities could only speculate on its intended target. 1377, for example, saw the hasty issue of writs for the defence of West Wales and then for the east coast; when the attacks did come, it was the towns of Rye and Hastings, the Isle of Wight and other places on the south coast which were the first to suffer². Clearly then, once a fleet had taken to sea, previous intelligence reports were often of little avail and, moreover, the fleet stood an excellent chance of eluding the vigilance of any naval force sent to counter it. Furthermore, a naval raiding force had the additional advantage that no matter how greatly they were outnumbered by land-based defenders, it was impossible for the defenders to watch every mile of coastline at the same time and to be able to concentrate sufficient forces at the place where the attack actually did come. The main reason why the English were frequently able to counter attacks on land stems from the nature of the French raids during the fourteenth century.

1. See Ch. XI below.

2. See Ch. III above.

In their raids upon the English coast, the French tended to concentrate their attacks on coastal towns. It was in such places that they could inflict the greatest material and psychological damage since it was in towns that the largest concentration of wealth was to be found: attacks on the open countryside would not yield such immediate dividends -- an important factor, considering that the desire for booty was a strong motivating force for many of the attackers. But it was in towns also that the greatest concentration of defensive forces was, of necessity, amassed. Thus the hit-and-run raids of the French were frequently repulsed. If the French had landed an invasion force as opposed to mere raiding parties, however, they would probably have chosen to land on open beaches. The projected invasion of 1386, for instance, was believed to have been aimed at the region between the Wash and the Thames¹. Such invasion attempts would probably have stood a fair chance of success, since, in the first place, the forces could conceivably have struck undetected, or at least, with little opposition, and secondly the English defence forces would possibly have been slow in arriving at the landing point in numbers sufficient to repel the invaders. The ease with which a sea-borne invasion force could land is clearly reflected by Edward III's own descent upon the Cotentin in 1346². A further example is afforded by Henry of Bolingbroke's landing in 1399.

That meeting the attackers on one's own shore was the worst possible strategy was evident to contemporaries. The concept of the

1. Chron. Ang., p. 371; C.C.R., 1385-9, pp. 186-7; Templeman, 'Two French Attempts to invade England', p. 232.

2. Froissart, iv. 389.

realm as a fortress:

'... set in the silver sea
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envoy of less happier lands'

which Shakespeare's John of Gaunt utters,¹ was certainly appreciated by Englishmen of the fourteenth century. The 'barbican policy', so often referred to in the parliaments of the 1370s, is a clear definition of the school of thought which believed that the first line of England's defence should be on the further side of the 'moat defensive'.² But whether the sea itself was regarded as a first or second line of defence is not so clear. Documentary sources imply that the importance of the sea in defence was appreciated; hence the repeated pointers in the parliaments of the 1370s and 1380s to defects in the navy as being one of the main causes of the grievances of the realm.³ By the fifteenth century it is certain that the keeping of the seas for the defence of the realm was a concept widely understood in England; a concept publicized by the author of the Libelle of Englyshe Polycye in the 1430s and by Capgrave in the 1440s, and one put into practice by Henry V in the second decade of the century and by Richard Neville, earl of Warwick in the 1460s⁴.

1. Shakespeare, Richard II, act II, scene ii. See also Ch. XII below.

2. See Ch. XII below.

3. See pp. 282-3 below.

4. The Libelle of Englyshe Polycye, ed. G. Warner (Oxford, 1926); John Capgrave, Liber de Illustribus Henricis, ed. F.C. Hingeston (R.S., London, 1858), p. 134. On Henry V's navy, see C.F. Richmond, 'English Naval Power in the Fifteenth Century', History, lii (1967), 1-15; J.H. Wylie, The Reign of Henry V (3 vols., Cambridge, 1914-29), ii. 369-90. On Warwick's powerful fleet when captain of Calais, see P.M. Kendall, Warwick the Kingmaker (London, 1973), pp. 39-42, 57-61, 259-60.

'Keeping of the sea' has been equated with naval defence, but not, as has recently been shown, with 'command of the sea'. The older naval historians payed great attention to Edward III's pretensions to be 'Lord of the Sea', and believed that victories such as Sluys and Les-Espagnols-sur-Mer gave the English a command of the sea which was lost in the 1370s after the battle of La Rochelle and other naval reversals¹. Recent research has shown, however, that the concept of 'command of the sea' did not exist during the Middle Ages². Indeed, it may justly be said that there was no pattern of strategy in naval warfare throughout the Hundred Years' War. Many of the naval combats of the war fought as the result of chance encounters. The battle of Sluys took place only because Edward III, who had already gathered a fleet to cross the Channel, heard that a French fleet had amassed in the port of Sluys. The Edwardian fleet was not formed for the specific purpose of smashing French naval power, thereby forestalling an invasion attempt upon England, but merely took advantage of an opportunity which presented itself. It is doubtful also whether the battle had any long-term benefits for English national defence.

Fleets, moreover, could only remain at sea for short periods and were limited to comparatively small areas of action. Often their missions would be abortive, although, in many instances, once some kind of success had been achieved -- such as the pillaging of enemy coastal

1. G.Y. Fiennes, Sea Power and Freedom (London, 1917), p.61; Perroy, The Hundred Years' War, p.106; McKisack, The Fourteenth Century, p. 129.

2. C.F. Richmond, 'The War at Sea', The Hundred Years' War, ed. Fowler, p. 98.

towns or the capture of prizes -- the fleet would return to port¹. The attacking fleets often had no fixed plan, but sailed wherever fortune took them. If a plan of campaign were preconceived, it was often abandoned once the fleet had put to sea, and new objectives were sought. The cruise of Don Pero Niño's fleet in 1405 shows just how erratic such naval campaigns could be and how decisions were taken as circumstances arose²; Owen of Wales' French-equipped fleet of 1372, which intended to attack Wales, instead turned its attention to the Channel Islands³. Such uncertainty of intent often meant grave headaches for the defenders of England.

It has been demonstrated that the defensive strategy, which was believed to be the soundest during the fourteenth century, was the principle of getting one's fleet prepared and at sea before the enemy could do so⁴. But although such a strategy was probably sensible, it was impossible for the English crown to hold fleets in constant readiness, and, as the course of events shows, the number of times the English were actually prepared to counter a naval threat at sea during the fourteenth century were relatively few indeed. It is certain that in the minds of many Englishmen there was no clear idea of the best course to take for naval defence. Thus in times of seeming failure, the crown often resorted to seeking the advice of the commons on the best methods for naval defence. Often, as in 1339, the commons might confess their

1. Richmond, op.cit., p. 99; J.W. Sherborne, 'The Battle of La Rochelle and the War at Sea, 1372-5', B.I.H.R., xlii (1969), 28.

2. The Unconquered Knight. A Chronicle of the Deeds of Don Pero Niño, Count of Buelna, ed. and trans. J. Evans (London, 1928), passim.

3. See above, pp. 45-6.

4. Richmond, op.cit., p. 99.

ignorance of naval matters and declare their inability to offer such advice, claiming that the responsibility for advice lay with the Cinque Ports, the experts in such affairs¹. Again, there was often disagreement between crown and commons over naval policy. In 1346, for example, it was debated whether it were preferable to defend the sea by fighting abroad, as the king suggested, or by retaining fleets in home waters for the protection of the coasts, as parliament suggested². Notwithstanding the self-interestedness of the parties concerned, it is clear from this instance, and from many others, that there was no single, clear policy for naval defence throughout the fourteenth century.

Nevertheless, naval defence -- and for the purpose of this study the term will mean the combatting of enemy fleets at sea -- was of crucial importance to England during the fourteenth century. Fleets raised by the English during the period had, however, a multitude of roles to play. Of these, one of the most important was the provision of armed transports. Since the crown tried to do most of its fighting abroad, ships were necessary for carrying expeditionary forces to France and for transporting troops for the garrisons of the English-held 'barbicans' abroad. An adjunct to the transporting of soldiers was the carrying of supplies both to the 'barbicans', most of which were situated on the coast, and to armies in the field³. But while these

1. Rot. Parl., ii. 104-5. Consultation by the crown was, on many occasions, a sop to the commons, asking their advice to justify demands for moneys. But the crown may often have genuinely sought advice at other times.

2. Rot. Parl., ii. 157-61.

3. E.g., the Crécy expedition of 1346 and English expeditions to Scotland during the reigns of the first three Edwards.

were the roles in which the English most frequently employed their shipping in time of war, there were also many others. Ships were sometimes used for raids -- often retaliatory ones -- upon the French coast. Although such coastal raids played a prominent part in French naval strategy, they did not feature so significantly in English naval policy. The English concentrated on landing armies in enemy territories and conducted their war effort chiefly on land. Possessions in France -- something which the French did not have in England -- facilitated this and, to an extent, dictated overall strategy towards a land-based war. The English, unlike the French, thus did not need to rely on coastal attacks to upset their adversary: the disorganization and material damage caused by French naval attacks upon the English coasts were directly paralleled on an even greater scale by the English chevauchées in France. Straightforward naval raids by English ships on the enemy coast were thus rare, although not unknown. Sir Walter Manny's raid on Cadzand in 1337 and the retaliatory attacks on Boulogne in 1340, on the Île de Caux in 1360, and on the unidentified Portus Petri in 1378 are some instances of coastal attacks by the English, but such raids were not a normal part of English naval policy¹.

More frequent were attacks by English ships on enemy vessels at sea. Quasi-piracy by seamen of all nations was the normal state of affairs in the North Sea and off the western coasts of France even in times of peace, and open war only added to the opportunities for material gain on the high seas. The spirit which, in peace-time, led to censure

1. Cadzand: Chron. Norm. du XIV^e Siècle, pp. 38-9; Boulogne: Baker, p. 67, Knighton, ii. 9, Murimuth, p. 103; Île de Caux: Chron. Ang., p. 42; 'Portus Petri': Chron. Ang., p. 193, Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 366-7.

from the authorities for attacks on alien vessels, was encouraged by the crown in time of war¹. Although many merchants were opposed to the arrest of their ships for royal service, there must have been many others who welcomed such arrest since it legalized their piratical activities. By the troubled 1370s and 1380s, for example, the number of letters of marque issued to private individuals was noticeably increasing. Thus, in December 1379, John Haule, Benedict de Bottesana, and Thomas Asshenden of Dartmouth received royal licence to go to sea at their own expense for one year from the feast of Purification, 1380, with a fleet of two ships, four barges and one balinger 'to attack and destroy ... the king's ... enemies'².

The roles of the navy mentioned above are all principally offensive in nature, but, nevertheless, the distinction between offensive and defensive functions was, on many occasions, very slight. Be that as it may, historians have tended to emphasize the offensive role of English fleets during the Middle Ages, one even completely ignoring the defensive role by stating that between 1066 and the late fifteenth century naval defence at sea was non-existent and that attacks of all naval raiders were met on land by shore-based defenders³. Such a judgement was correct for some periods during the fourteenth century, but other instances belied it.

1. Examples of the crown ordering the release of wrongfully captured alien vessels in time of peace or truce, payments of compensation to the injured parties, or punishments of the crews who had made such captures are numerous, e.g., P.R.O., C. 81/1394/56a; E. 364/13, m.5; E. 364/14, m. 2^v.

2. C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 405. In July 1387, a group of shipmasters from Hull received a similar licence to attack enemy ships without rendering account (C.P.R., 1385-9, pp. 339, 342). On the subject of letters of marque, see R. de Mas-Latrie, 'Du Droit de Marque ou Droit de Représailles au Moyen Âge', B.É.C., 6th series, ii (1866), 529-77.

3. M.A. Lewis, History of the British Navy (Harmondsworth, 1955), pp. 24-5.

The outbreak of war with France was accompanied by naval activity on a large scale. England had been involved in a naval war with the Scots from the early 1330s, and when the French entered the war in 1337 the intensity increased. During the opening years of the war with France much concern for defence at sea was shown. The high incidence of enemy raids has been shown above¹. To counter them, English fleets under successive admirals of the north and of the west took to sea during the 1330s and 1340s 'pro defensione regni contra hostiles alienigenarum invasiones'². The terminology in documents relating to such fleets is, however, often vague. In some instances fleets were raised for expeditions overseas. But because the phrase 'for the defence of the realm' frequently embraced purely offensive service abroad, as in the case of commissions of array, it is difficult to judge exactly the intended role of certain fleets. Sir Walter Manny's fleet which raided the Flemish coast in 1337, for instance, was described as being 'in obsequium nostrum pro defensione regni'³.

Nevertheless, there is no mistaking the true function of certain other fleets. In June 1336 the admirals of the west and north were said to be searching for hostile galleys: in 1337 an admiral was appointed specifically to guard the coasts of Lancashire; in March 1347, 120 ships were to go to sea 'tam pro expedicione guerre nostre

1. See Ch. I.

2. E.g., P.R.O., C. 47/35/10/20; C. 76/14, mm. 9, 14; E. 403/294, m. 15; C.P.R., 1334-8, pp. 271, 387, 891, etc.

3. P.R.O., C. 61/49, m. 15. Manny's action was arguably of assistance to home defence.

Francie, quam pro salvacione et secura conductione navium et mercandisarum ... ac defensione costerarum maritinarum'¹. Protection of English merchant shipping at sea also played a vital part of the role of such fleets, and examples of such protection afforded by vessels serving under the royal admirals are numerous. In January 1338, for instance, two royal galleys were detailed to protect English shipping going to Scotland². An extension of the responsibility for protecting shipping at sea was the use of the convoy system, which was employed extensively in times of danger, particularly for the defence of wine-ships going to Gascony³.

The prerequisite for putting fleets to sea was the provision of ships. For these, the English crown relied upon a number of sources. By far the largest supply of ships was raised by the principle of impressment. Whenever a fleet was needed, whether for transporting armies abroad or for defence of the coasts, royal admirals were usually appointed, one for the coasts from the mouth of the river Thames to the north, and one for the coasts to the south and west of the river mouth. The admirals were given the authority to arrest men and ships for the king's service, and in this task they were aided by the royal sergeants-at-arms and clerks of the royal household. Ancillary measures, such as the supply of victuals, arms and equipment, were normally the responsibility of the sheriffs, while commissioners of array were often

1. Foedera, II. ii. 941 (1336); P.R.O., E. 403/293, mm. 10, 11 (1337). This appointment is omitted from the list of admirals in the Handbook of British Chronology, ed. F.M. Powicke and E.B. Fryde (London, 1961), p.128. C. 76/24, m. 23; C. 76/25, m. 26 (1347).

2. C.P.R., 1334-8, p. 564.

3. E.g., C.P.R., 1338-40, pp. 2, 81, 84; C.P.R., 1354-60, p. 600, etc.

responsible for raising the troops who would fight the ships¹. The vessels impressed in this way were mainly merchantmen which doubled as fighting ships and transports in war time, and the greatest burden of the English naval policy fell, in consequence, upon the private-ship-owner. Nevertheless, despite some administrative inadequacies during the initial stages of the war, the system of impressment could be used to raise quite large fleets. Edward III's fleet before Calais in 1346-7, for example, comprised 738 ships². Although such impressment undoubtedly caused hardship to shipowners through loss of trade, risk of loss or damage, and, until 1380, lack of payment for services, fleets raised by impressment continued to be an important feature in English naval policy throughout the period³.

Other sources of ships were also available to the English crown. The crown did possess a small core of royal ships, which varied in number throughout the period, but which rarely numbered more than twenty-five⁴. The Cinque Ports' service of providing fifty-seven ships for forty days continued to feature in naval affairs, and although, as some writers have suggested, the role of the Cinque Ports dwindled during the fourteenth century, it is clear that in the troubled decades of the 1370s and 1380s the crown's reliance on Cinque Ports' remained quite high⁵. Thus, in May 1378, the vessels of the Cinque

1. See A.E. Prince, 'The Army and Navy', The English Government at Work, ed. Willard and Morris, i. 377-93; M. Oppenheim, History of the Administration of the Royal Navy and of Merchant Shipping in Relation to the Navy (London, 1896), pp. 1-44; J.S. Kepler, 'The Effect of the Battle of Sluys upon the Administration of English Naval Impressment, 1340-3', Speculum, xlviii (1973), 70-7.

2. Kepler, op.cit., espec. p. 76.

3. See Richmond, 'The War at Sea', p. 108.

4. Kepler, op.cit., p. 70.

5. See M. Burrows, The Cinque Ports (London, 1888); K.M.E. Murray, The Constitutional History of the Cinque Ports (Manchester, 1935).

Ports were to be arrayed and armed, while repairs to the Cinque Ports' fleet were authorized in June 1383, and in September 1384 the Warden was ordered to prepare the ships of the Ports to sail at a moment's notice¹.

The main type of ship made available by the above means was the cog, a vessel which could be used as a fighting ship in war and as a merchant vessel in peace. In wartime, the English and French employed such vessels chiefly in the role of armed transports and also as warships in purely naval encounters between ships at sea². This second function was a simple extension of the belligerent role which merchant men had even in peacetime, and which was typified in the character of Chaucer's shipman. But the French and Castilians in their offensives against the English coasts chiefly made use of another type of vessel -- the oared galley³. French successes at sea and in attacks upon the coasts of England, particularly in the 1370s, depended largely upon the use of the fast-moving galley, a vessel admirably suited to hit-and-run raiders, a vessel, moreover, which was first and foremost a warship. The desire for effective protection against the fast-roving fleets of enemy galleys operating in the Channel drove the English to search themselves for supplies of galleys. But whereas the French and their allies almost solely reserved the galley for coastal raids and attacks on shipping, in English hands, the galley's role was chiefly defensive. The English

1. Foedera, IV. 39 (1378); C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 286 (1383); C.C.R., 1381-5, p.467. The ports were often called upon to advise the king 'how the sea may be guarded and the realm defended against attacks of the king's enemies', as in September 1380 (C.C.R., 1377-81, p. 105).

2. Numerous works have appeared on medieval ships. The most valuable include L. Arenhold, 'Ships earlier than 1500', M.M., i (1911), 298-301; P. Cowburn, The Warship in History (London, 1966), pp. 43-67.

3. On French efforts to secure galleys through friendship with Genoa, alliance with Castile, and a home programme of galley-building, see Chs. I-III above. On galleys, see B. Waites, 'The Fighting Galley', H.T., xviii (1968), 337-43.

did not employ their limited numbers of galleys on hit-and-run raids upon the enemy coast -- such tactics did not, in fact, play a great part in English naval policy. Rather, the role of the English galley was the defensive one of locating and intercepting hostile fleets at sea.

Throughout the century, the English crown tried from time to time to acquire galleys. In the 1330s, approaches were made to Genoa; in 1340, unsuccessful overtures were made to the Doge of Venice for the hire of forty or more galleys for one year, the Doge being further requested to attempt to dissuade the Genoese from aiding the French, substantial trading rights being offered in return for these services; in the 1360s, 1370s, and 1380s, English involvement in Iberia was partially influenced by the desire to gain access to a source of galleys¹. Throughout the century small numbers of galleys, often hired from foreign sources, were used by the English. In 1348, for instance, Almeric de Pavia was appointed 'capitaneum et ductorem galearum nostrarum' with powers of chastisement and arrest of seamen similar to those of the regular royal admirals². In the 1370s and 1380s Aragonese and Portuguese galleys sailed under the English flag³.

Such squadrons of galleys were chiefly used for patrolling the seas. Thus in January 1338, the galleys of John de Aurea and Nicholas Blancus

1. C.P.R., 1334-8, pp. 321, 345; Foedera, II. ii. 957 (Genoa); State Papers and MSS. relating to English Affairs existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in other Libraries in Northern Italy, 1202-1509, pp. 8-9 (Venice); Russell, English Intervention in Spain and Portugal, p. 228.

2. P.R.O., C. 76/26, m. 17.

3. C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 508; Russell, op. cit., p. 228.

were sent to scour the seas towards the northern parts in search of enemy vessels, and to afford protection for English ships going to Scotland¹. Whenever auxiliary vessels were requested by the English kings from Bayonne, these, too, usually operated in a preventative and defensive role. In 1337, Bayonne was asked to provide ships to counter the French fleet at sea, to aid English vessels in their search for the enemy, and, more positively, the vice-admiral of Aquitaine, Nicholas Ursumare was instructed to attack and destroy all hostile ships in Norman ports and at sea². In 1350, the Bayonnese were asked to prepare their vessels to obstruct the Castilian fleet on its journey north³.

There was, moreover, a concerted effort made by the English at times to build their own galleys to counter the threat from hostile galleys. In 1337, for example, a galley of sixty oars or more was ordered to be built in the town of Lynn⁴. By the 1370s the crown was certainly taking the initiative in the provision of vessels suitable to counter the increased threat from French and Castilian galley fleets. Thus in the parliaments of 1372 and 1377, certain towns in England were ordered to build barges and balingers at their own cost⁵. In 1372 it

1. C.P.R., 1334-8, p. 564; Foedera, II. ii. 1008.

2. Foedera, II. ii. 946, 951, 962, 965, 977.

3. Ibid., III. i. 202.

4. P.R.O., E. 358/4, m. 7^v. In 1342, a galley and a barge were said to be under construction at Lynn, but whether this was the same galley as the one mentioned in 1337 is impossible to say. Thomas de Melchebourne, purveyor of equipment necessary for the construction of galleys is, however, mentioned on both occasions (C.P.R., 1340-3, p. 383). The Lynn galley of 1337 was one of those which parliament ordered to be built at the expense of certain towns, a forerunner of the barge policy of the 1370s (C.C.R., 1333-7, p. 644).

5. Such measures were probably taken after the crown's promised investigations into the best remedies for improving the state of the navy (Rot.Parl., ii. 311; iii. 25).

seems that all inhabitants of the specified towns were expected to contribute, and during 1373 there was feverish activity in ship-building in many of the towns concerned¹. The instructions of 1377 were more specific. Thirty-two balingers of forty to fifty oars were to be built in various towns at the costs of the richest inhabitants, and were to be ready to sail by 1 March 1378. It was promised that the vessels would be returned to the towns at the cessation of hostilities². The definition of 'richer inhabitants' varied from town to town: in Cambridge, Derby, Gloucester, Huntingdon, Nottingham, and Warwick persons with goods worth ten marks or more were to contribute; in Bury and Thetford those with £10 in chattels were to pay; in Lincoln the onus lay on those with £40 or more in chattels³. As in 1372-3, much building activity resulted from the royal order⁴.

The aim of the crown in this matter was evidently to provide a nucleus of ships with which to combat the threat of enemy galleys. The weight of public opinion expressed in parliament may have lain behind such an action, but it is certain that the ship-building programmes of the 1370s did have a measure of success. Many of the vessels constructed in the towns during the decade were still giving good service in the

1. E.g., P.R.O., E. 364/12, m. 3; C.P.R., 1370-4, pp. 219, 227, 233, 245, etc.

2. C.C.R., 1377-81, pp. 323; Foedera, IV. 24. The Cinque Ports were to build five balingers between them, and since this was strictly contrary to their charters, the king promised that it would not prejudice their liberties in the future. He stressed the fact that he merely wanted an adequate supply of ships quickly.

3. C.C.R., 1377-81, pp. 43-4.

4. E.g., C.P.R., 1377-81, pp. 77, 80; C.C.R., 1377-81, pp. 43, 46, 47, 52, 55, 113-14, 181-2, etc.

1380s. In November 1382, for instance, the town barges of Boston, Colchester, Ipswich, Lynn, and other towns on the east coast were ordered to sea in the service of the admiral of the north¹. The policy of instructing provincial towns to build balingers was modified in the 1380s by making towns responsible also for repairs to existing vessels, and this method of provision of ships and for their maintenance was continued into the fifteenth century². More than providing ships for naval defence, the system of town balingers must also have been a morale booster to the people of England, to whom they represented a tangible effort to combat the growing enemy menace at sea. This is reflected in the willingness to pay shown in many of the towns concerned. At Exeter, for example, £130 5s. 9 d. was spent on the construction of the city barge in 1374³.

Whatever the methods used to raise ships for the war at sea, it is clear that these vessels could be deployed in a number of different ways, often as transports or purely for defence, but often the distinction between defensive and other functions was blurred. Nevertheless, a policy of sending fleets to sea for the defence of the realm was evident from time to time.

The English fleets which gained victories at Sluys in 1340 and at the battle of Les-Espagnols-sur-Mer ten years later were not true examples of the defensive role played by the navy. More representative were the naval forces which went to sea patrolling against enemy

1. C.C.R., 1381-5, p. 181.

2. In 1382 and 1383, Colchester, Ipswich and Norwich were variously requested to repair barges, balingers, and crayers (C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 295; C.C.R., 1381-5, p. 145). In 1401, there was an abortive attempt to raise thirty-five balingers by this means (C.C.R., 1399-1402, p. 231).

3. Exeter City R.O., Receiver's Account Roll, 48-9 Edward III.

vessels. In the 1330s, it was usual for squadrons of English ships to be sent to sea during the war season to guard against the incursions of hostile raiders and to prevent attacks upon English shipping. Thus, in 1337, a fleet under Geoffrey de Say, admiral of the west, was at sea for several months; forces under the admirals William Trussel and Robert de Morle patrolled the seas from February 1339 to defend the realm from imminent attack¹. In the 1340s and 1350s the need for naval defence declined as a combination of factors led to a decrease in French naval activity². In these years the principal English naval effort was expended upon transportation of troops and supplies to France. On relatively few occasions were steps taken for naval defence. Such steps were naturally only taken when a French naval force did threaten. In 1359, for example, a subsidy of sixpence in the pound was granted from 1 December for the expenses of troops going to sea for the protection of merchant shipping, and throughout the early months of 1360 there were numerous instances of preparation of a fleet to go to sea 'to resist the malice of the king's enemies'. The vessels and their crews were to be ready at Sandwich by 7 April³. In addition to the armada raised for general defence, measures were also taken for specific reasons. In June, for instance, the town of Hartlepool was licenced to

1. E.g., P.R.O., E. 403/294, m. 15; E. 404/3/21 (Say); C. 76/14, mm. 9, 14 (Trussel and Morle). For numerous similar examples of royal admirals' putting to sea for defence, see Nicolas, History of the Royal Navy and Clowes, The Royal Navy, passim.

2. See Ch.I above.

3. C.P.R., 1358-61, pp. 319-20, 330, 411, 413-14, 452; C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 10, 14, 16-17, 24, 29, etc.

to fit out a ship for the protection of its fishing fleet¹.

Such measures were clearly only taken if the threat of attack presented itself. With the resumption of hostilities in 1369 and its accompanying increase in French naval aggression, the question of naval defence arose more frequently. Between 1369 and 1380, Franco-Castilian hit-and-run raids reached their highest intensity. The resultant terror and misery of these raids, attacks on English shipping at sea, and seeming disaster in battle at La Rochelle all combined to spur the English to greater naval activity.

Reaction to such reversals was reflected first of all in incessant and vociferous complaints in parliament, and secondly in increased involvement in the raising of fleets. The suggestion that naval deficiencies lay at the root of the threat to the realm had been one which had been voiced in parliaments of the late 1330s and early 1340s². In 1339, for instance, it had been claimed that the French had done much damage by land and sea 'pur defaute d'une [English] Navie sur mere'. In the 1370s and 1380s, a period which, from the point of view of enemy attacks, closely resembled the late 1330s, similar sentiments were expressed. Well could the commons in 1372 hark back to the brighter days of the 1340s and 1350s, when the light of signal English victories at sea had outshone the gloom caused by enemy raids, and when Edward III had truly been 'le Roi de la Mier'. Although with hindsight we can appreciate the wider causes of English success in the pre-Brétigny phase

1. C.P.R., 1353-61, p. 427.

2. Rot. Parl., ii. 103, 104, 108, 116, 121, etc. See also Ch. I above.

of the war¹, it is clear that to contemporaries lack of English victories, and what was worse, actual defeats at sea in the 1370s were judged as stemming from deficiencies in the navy. Such grievances were reflected in the numerous complaints about the navy in the parliaments of the closing years of Edward III's reign and the opening years of the reign of Richard II². That there was justification for the complaints is witnessed in the numerous coastal places which were attacked during the period. Whether French successes were due to an increase in French naval efficiency or to a decline in English sea-power was irrelevant to the contemporary's mind: all that he could see was that attacks were taking place and that the navy was powerless to prevent them. In consequence, attempts at naval reform were carried out. The late 1370s saw increased payments to troops serving at sea, while the introduction of payment to owners of ships in 1380, and the attempts to increase the numbers of ships available by the system of 'town barge'-building all pointed to the seriousness with which the naval difficulties were regarded³.

But despite complaints about the state of the navy, it is clear that the 1370s and 1380s saw the most intense English naval activity of the fourteenth-century phase of the war. In each season of war, fleets took to sea 'pro custodia maris' or 'pro salva custodia et conductu navium ... in quodam viagio supra mare cum flota regis'. In 1371, for instance, John de Neville of Raby, the admiral of the north

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1. See Richmond, 'The War at Sea', pp. 97-100.
 2. See Chs. III and XIII.
 3. See above, pp. 278-80.

was at sea with a large fleet from February, while his colleague, Guy de Brienne, the admiral of the west also carried out naval patrols¹. Each succeeding year told the same tale. The crucial years 1385-6 were particularly active ones for the English fleets. In March 1385, for example, the admirals, John de Radyngton, the prior of the Hospital of St. John, and Thomas de Percy were ordered to sea with a combined fleet of twenty niefs, eight barges, eight balingers, and six vittailleurs, each with 'double eskipeson'. These vessels were to serve for a minimum period of a quarter of a year, and their function was to maintain 'custodia maris et costere eisdem'². 1386 saw similar activity.

But despite increased activity in the sphere of naval defence during the 1370s and 1380s, it is clear that on many occasions English vessels were not at sea in time to counter raiding enemy fleets. In 1377, for example, English naval forces were not properly mobilized and at sea until November, whereas Jean de Vienne's fleets had been able to inflict severe depredations on the English coasts³. Lack of finances or other reasons -- Edward III's death in June 1377, for example, had upset English naval preparations in that year -- lay behind such unpreparedness. And even when fleets did put to sea to counter the French and their allies, they were often an ineffective defence, as the numerous successful enemy raids of the 1370s and 1380s show all too clearly. There seems, furthermore, to have been very little evidence of coordination and cooperation between the defensive forces on land and those at sea during the fourteenth century. Indeed, the land-based

1. E.g., P.R.O., E. 364/4, mm. 3, 23; E. 364/5, mm. 28^v, 30^v, 31^v; E. 364/6, mm. 6^v, 7^v, etc. For details of fleets taking to sea throughout the period, see Nicolas, History of the Royal Navy, and Clowes, The Royal Navy, passim.

2. E.g., P.R.O., C. 76/69, mm. 8, 12; E. 101/68/10/240; E. 364/20, mm. 5, 7; E. 403/508, mm. 1, 7; E. 403/510, m. 17, etc.

3. See Ch.III above.

defensive officials were often at cross purposes with the royal admirals, particularly over the question of recruitment of troops from coastal areas for service at sea, which incidentally resulted in the reduction in the number of men available for coastal defence¹. By the 1370s, however, there is some slight suggestion of the appreciation of the concept of cooperation between forces for defence at sea and on land. Troops and sailors at sea from April to July 1372, for instance, were said to be 'in obsequium regis supra mare ... ad resistendum maliciam inimicorum regis ... et super salva custodia costera maris'². Robert de Asshendon, the admiral of the north, was serving with 198 esquires, 109 armed men, and 188 archers between October 1372 and January 1373 in the king's service 'tam per terram quam per mare super salva custodia parcium' of the northern admiralty³. The wording of the document suggests that in this case the admiral's jurisdiction extended to defence on land as well as on the sea, although there is some ambiguity about this. Nevertheless, in April 1385, Thomas de Percy, admiral of the north, took to sea with a fleet for the keeping of the sea and the defence of the coasts, while his colleague, John de Radington, admiral of the south, was responsible in July and August for the defence of 'costeris maris in partibus Kancie, pro salva custodia villarum Sandwyci et la Rye, et aliarum villarum super costeris predictis', for which he was paid £200⁴. Here is a clear example of the amalgamating of the

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1. E.g., P.R.O., C. 76/14, m.13.
 2. P.R.O., E. 364/6, m. 3.
 3. P.R.O., E. 364/7, m. 7^v.
 4. P.R.O., E. 403/508, mm. 18, 20.

functions of defence upon land and upon sea, which was probably caused by the worsening of the defensive crisis which faced the English authorities. The idea of a combined force for land-and-sea-defence was also implied in the terms of the contracts between the king and certain private individuals for the defence of the east coast in 1383¹. Naval and land-based defensive forces had been combined occasionally at earlier periods. In 1340, for example, Southampton had been protected by a garrison of fifty men-at-arms and 100 archers, and its safety had been further ensured by two spinaces harboured in the port for the town's defence². But such examples were isolated, and only became more common during the post-Brétigny phase of the war.

It is evident that the English were concerned for naval defence during the fourteenth century and took steps to ensure the defence of the seas and the sea coasts. Whether the raising of fleets to combat the enemy at sea had much defensive success is open to doubt. The contemporary chroniclers tell the tale of prominent English victories at sea during the first phase of the Hundred Years' War. References to attacks upon and the capture of enemy vessels are numerous both in the chronicles and official records. On the other hand, the chronicles and English official documentary sources make it very clear that English naval defence was not as successful as might be imagined, particularly during the 1370s and 1380s. The lists of coastal places attacked,

1. C.P.R., 1381-5, pp. 278, 353-5, 359-60, etc.

2. Rot. Parl., ii. 108.

complaints regarding the state of the navy, extraordinary concern for the strengthening of naval power by the crown, all are strong testimony to the ineffectiveness of English naval defence. Perhaps the most telling evidence is seen in the frequent orders to coastal towns to beach their undefended ships lest raiders should burn them, and in the licences granted to coastal areas in the 1370s and 1380s permitting them to buy off the raiders should an attack be threatened¹.

The real problem for the English lay not in any deficiencies in their naval preparations, although in certain specific instances this may have well been the case, but in the nature of long-term naval war. Any defensive naval operations by the English mainly took the form of long periods of patrolling the seas, punctuated by only sporadic encounters and action. In the absence of sophisticated navigational aids and detection devices, it was easy for fleets to miss one another at sea. Consequently, since the element of chance was high in naval operations, it is difficult to assess success or failure in the naval war on a blow by blow basis. Throughout the war successful French attacks on English coastal places and on shipping were counterbalanced to an extent by the English capture of enemy vessels at sea, but only truly paralleled outside the sphere of the naval war, in the chevauchées and military activity in France itself. If real naval success were measured on a strict blow by blow basis, then the years 1385 and 1386

1. E.g., C.C.R., 1385-9, pp. 175, 327, C.I.M., 1348-77, p. 421 (ships beached or kept in port for safety); C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 554 (licence to buy off attackers). See also Appendices 9 and 11.

should be regarded as successful ones from the English naval standpoint: squadrons operating from English ports and out of Calais captured many vessels of the enemy invasion fleets, while those invasion fleets did not strike anywhere in England. The failure of the projected invasions was not, however, caused by the might of the English naval forces, but by a number of other factors.¹ None the less, in purely material terms, the damage at sea perpetrated by English vessels during these years of crisis was greater than actual damage caused by the French at sea. It is clear from the contemporary chronicles and official documentary sources, however, that the English did not regard their naval policy as successful in 1385-6, nor at any other time during the 1370s and 1380s, with the possible exception of the final two years of war before the truce of Leulinghen was sealed in June 1389.

The nature of the naval war in the fourteenth century, with its great element of chance and the resulting difficulties experienced by those operating a policy of naval defence, meant that whatever naval efforts were undertaken by Englishmen, they could not, and did not, obviate coastal raids, nor could they have prevented an invasion had it come. Despite the obvious ineffectiveness of any naval defence, it is clear that Englishmen believed that national salvation depended partly, at least, upon a sound policy of naval defence. In consequence, much energy and effort were expended in this direction during the fourteenth-century phase of the Hundred Years' War.

1. See Ch. III above.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SPIES AND INTELLIGENCE

As an Aid to Defence

In any war, intelligence systems play an important part. This was certainly the case during the fourteenth century, when intelligence affected the English defence system from at least two different points of view. First, there was the need to gather reliable information about the enemy's intentions, his movements and his preparations for hostilities. The king and his Council needed such information to take any steps necessary to counteract any possible danger. Espionage, from the English viewpoint, therefore played an important role. Secondly, espionage was naturally not restricted to the English alone. The French, Scots and other enemies were only too ready to reciprocate in the use of secret agents, which was to cause many headaches for the English in the defence of the realm, and to lead to stringent counter-measures against such subversive activities. It will be necessary to deal with these two different aspects separately.

Time and time again, royal writs issued for the defence of the realm included paragraphs outlining in no small detail the imminent perils which were about to befall the realm. In most cases one is told that these are not mere threats, but are based upon fact, the king having received 'reliable reports' that the

enemy intends to launch an attack in such and such a vicinity. Such phrases occurred with so much regularity that they present two possible interpretations: first, they had a propaganda motive which was intended to impress upon the king's subjects the gravity of the threat; secondly, that the king had, in fact, received reliable information in each case about his enemy's plans. Probably each interpretation is applicable to a certain degree, but the scope of response to such writs would imply that the recipients recognised the validity of the warnings embodied in them, and this in turn reflects the existence of an intelligence system whose findings might be acted upon with a certain amount of confidence in their accuracy.

However, intelligence agents are, by the very nature of their profession, shadowy individuals, and this is reflected in contemporary official documents. While many contemporary chroniclers make more than passing reference to spies,¹ all governments, be they in England, France or Scotland, were extremely loth to refer to agents in their own employ as spies. Instead euphemisms such as 'messenger' were used in official documents, thus making it difficult to judge whether the particular person referred to was in fact a straightforward messenger, or whether he was engaged in activities of a more secret nature. Thus, the historian is presented with a problem. Sometimes the context of the document leaves one in no such doubt, but where no such qualification occurs, one can only surmise. It was rare indeed for governments to refer to their own agents by the terms espie or

1. See Alban and Allmand, 'Spies and Spying in the Fourteenth Century', War, Literature, and Politics, ed. Allmand, pp. 73-101. ~~Parts of this chapter have been published in this article.~~

explorator. In this respect, the English government was more coy than the French. It was only when referring to agents of the other side that the term 'spy' was most commonly used, ostensibly to increase the impact of such threats upon one's subjects, and at the same time to discredit the enemy.

The English accounting documents throughout this period contain entries of payments made to messengers and others sent on secret missions. Terms such as 'in negociis regis secretis', 'pour certaines busoignes qe nous touchent', or 'en noz secrees busoignes' regularly occur. In the absence of further evidence accompanying these entries, it is difficult to ascertain precisely what these secret needs entailed. A variety of interpretations may be inferred from contemporary examples. On some occasions such phrases could perhaps mean no more than the secret conveyance of royal moneys from one place to another, or the bearing of royal messages of a confidential nature. Thomas Sayvill was paid for going in 1381 'in diversis negociis regis'; these negotiations consisted of the transport of bullion and the carrying of writs concerning the arrest of ships.¹ On other occasions, the term 'in secretis negociis regis' might mean nothing more than diplomatic intercourse with the heads or representatives of other states. The ambassadors sent to deal with Bernabo Visconti of Milan in 1379 were thus sent in this way.² In 1371 Esmon Rose, esquire, received wages and expenses for three journeys to the continent, the first to Flanders to Thomas Spigurnel, 'pur enformer le dit

1. P.R.O., E.364/18, m.5^v.

2. P.R.O., E.364/13, mm.5^v, 6.

Thomelyn de nostre volente', and to help him to buy destriers and other horses for the king; the second payment was for a journey to Amiens, again to purchase a destrier; the third journey entailed another visit to Flanders, 'pur autres secrees busoignes dont nous lui chargames'. This third phrase implies that the first two journeys had also been of a secret nature, although it is obvious that their prime purpose was innocent.¹

However, it remains exceedingly difficult in the majority of cases to determine whether journeys made on the king's secret affairs were in fact made for intelligence purposes. It is probable that in a great deal of cases the term 'secret' meant nothing more than 'private', although some writers have maintained that specific terms such as 'the king's business in the direction of Scotland' suggest something more important than run-of-the-mill message-bearing.² It is equally likely that in the great majority of cases such terms were used as a mere convention by the royal scribes responsible for the entries in the accounts, used for the purpose of brevity.

The problem thus remains, but it is not so great as appears at first sight: contemporary evidence suggests that even straightforward messengers were expected to keep their eyes and ears open for information that might prove valuable. Indeed, it appears that to the fourteenth-century mind there was not a very clear differentiation between the spy and the messenger. For instance, there is a tendency, common to both English and French, to include payments of persons who from the description of their work, or by

1. P.R.O., E.404/10/66.

2. E.g., M.C.Hill, The King's Messengers, p. 98.

the epithet 'spy' applied to them, are indeed secret agents, among lists of payments to straightforward messengers. The interrelationship between spies and messengers is clearly illustrated by an account of messengers' wages of the county of Artois dated 1341,¹ and similar examples are to be found in contemporary English documents. The Wardrobe Book of 44 Edward III contains an entry, again included in a list of messengers' expenses, of payment of 110 marks to Frank de Hale, Captain of Calais, for his expenses made 'sur divers messages et autres espies ... as diverses parties, pour espier et savoir la volente et les faitz des enemys de France au temps que nostre filz, le duc de Lancastre, estoit en nostre service as parties de France'.² This would seem to suggest the close link between spies and other messengers, and contemporary evidence provides examples of the same person being employed in the dual role. Thus, Wantelet de Lymouze, described as a messenger, received £18 tournois from the Master of the Crossbows of France in May 1340 in compensation for a horse lost when Wantelet went 'au devant les Alamanz pour savoir et rapporter au dit monsieur le maistre l'estat et convenue des diz Alamanz'.³ 'Messengers', too, were sent by Edward III to Normandy in 1339 to discover information about certain galleys in port there.⁴

1. Arch. Dép., Pas-de-Calais, A.586/2.

2. P.R.O., E.404/10/65; Issue Roll of Thomas de Brantingham, p. 493. The italics are mine.

3. B.N., MS. fr. 25996/240-1.

4. P.R.O., E.36/203, fo. 112^v.

Not only was the similarity between the two cemented by common usage, but in France, at least, it received official recognition: French ordinances of the period refer to spies and messengers in the same breath.¹

Much documentary evidence remains, also, to show that ordinary messengers frequently uncovered information which was of benefit to the king. They were expected to be on the alert when travelling abroad, especially when in the realm of a potential enemy. The three messengers sent by Edward II to Paris in 1323-24 with messages to the French court, sent him back a very detailed account of the movements of the French king and of the state of current affairs in France.² Messengers dispatched abroad on specific business could send any incidental discoveries to the king as in the case above. In 1385, for example, Thomas atte Mille was paid 40s. for bringing 'nouvelles ... de noz messages esteantz es parties de dela pour le trete de la pees.'³ Occasionally, too, messengers were instructed by word of mouth, and were similarly expected to report back to the king orally. Many instances arose where messages were delivered 'par commaundement de la buche'.⁴ Messengers bearing important news or good tidings (often in addition to the letters which they were carrying) were often rewarded for their services by the king. In 1369, for example, Edward III gave in gift ('de nostre don')

1. Père Anselme, Histoire de la Maison Royale de France (9 vols., Paris, 1730), vi. 234.

2. Cal. Chancery Warrants, 1230-1326, pp. 548-9.

3. P.R.O., E.404/14/90.

4. E.g., P.R.O., E.101/311/13.

to Clayskyn de la Haye twenty marks, 'li quel Clayskyn nous apportast nouvelle de la nativite d'un filz de la duchesse de Bayverer.'¹

Such was the threat to security presented by the presence of foreign messengers, that all sides took great heed. The danger was recognised by at least one contemporary writer. The shrewd Burgundian, Philippe de Commines, writing in the following century advised that

'If they [foreign messengers or envoys] come from true friends of whom there can be no suspicion, treat them with good cheer and grant them frequent audience, but dismiss them soon, for friendship among princes does not endure forever. If from hostile courts, send honourably to meet them, lodge them well, set safe and wise men about them to watch who visits them, and keep malcontents away, give them audience at once, and be rid of them.'

He concluded with the advice that in time of war, a ruler should send back two messengers to the enemy's country for every one sent to his:

'... and take every opportunity of sending, for you can have no better spies, and it will be hard to keep a watch over two or three.'²

Although this doctrine was not published by Commines until the fifteenth century, it is plain that its tenets were held by rulers of the fourteenth century. As a result, in England, no less than in France, trusted messengers were often sent to meet envoys and messengers from abroad, ostensibly to act as guides, interpreters and protectors, but really so that the king should have some sort of check on the movements and activities of foreigners whilst they were

1. P.R.O., E.404/10/64.

2. Collection des Mémoires relatifs à l'Histoire de France: xii Mémoires de Philippe de Commines, ed. M. Petitot (Paris, 1826), pp. 52-4.

in the country, and to keep note of, or even restrict, contacts with other persons. From as early as the reign of Edward I such measures were regarded as standard procedure,¹ and necessary, too, since it is known that envoys and messengers were expected to report back to the king or his council in person on completion of their mission. Froissart describes how in 1336 John de Thrandeston, returning to England from a mission to the Low Countries, was obliged to travel first to London, and then on to York where the king was, in order to report his findings to him in person.² English messengers abroad could expect similar treatment. Miss Hill has noted that an English messenger, Jack Faukes, who was obliged to pass through the realm of France en route to the papal court at Avignon, was provided with a French escort whilst in that country.³

It is clear that there was indeed, in the eyes of contemporaries, a very close connexion between the activities of envoys and messengers, and those of spies. It is true that the English kings and their Councils expected their envoys or messengers to report back information concerning the enemy, and we need not doubt that such persons were an important source of information. But the

1. Hill, The King's Messengers, p. 95. Such measures were taken throughout the period under consideration, and well into the fifteenth century (Alban and Allmand, 'Spies and Spying', pp. 77-8).

2. Froissart, xviii. 155.

3. M. C. Hill, 'Jack Faukes, King's Messenger, and his Journey to Avignon in 1343', E.H.R., lvii (1942), 24-5; --, The King's Messengers, p. 97.

intelligence activities of these persons were only incidental to their other duties. Official records reveal the existence of a distinct class of agents in the employ of the crown, whose primary purpose was to spy upon the enemy and to report their findings back to the king and Council. Unfortunately, references to these nebulous characters are few, but such as do occur show that these undercover agents formed a separate class from the royal messengers. However, references to them are so rare as to allow the historian to form only the flimsiest picture of these people. It is all too easy for the researcher to overlook such agents unless they are positively described as spies, or payments made to them make mention of the nature of their work. Some idea of the problem may be appreciated if one realises that many entries in the accounting documents merely mention the name of the person receiving payment, with no mention of the services for which the payment is made.

The Issue Roll of Michaelmas Term 1378 noted a payment made on 25 October to Nicholas Briser, esquire of France, who was retained ('retento') by the king for the annual fee of fifty marks.¹ Now the Issue Rolls contain many entries concerning the payment of fief-rentes to foreign knights and squires, so it may be that the payment to Briser fell into the same category; absence of a qualifying clause prevents one from drawing any positive conclusions. However, some indication of the nature of his employment was given in April 1379, when he received 71s. 1d. for 'jurato domino regi coram consilio suo ad faciendum comodum ipsius domini regis meliori modo poterit ad nocumentum inimicorum suorum in expeditionem

1. P.R.O., E.403/471, m.5. He was referred to by name only again on 25 May, and on 9 June 1379 (E.403/472, m.6). On 8 September 1379, he was described simply as 'valleto de Harfleu' (ibid., m.13).

guerrarum regis'.¹ The exact nature of his office was revealed in the description 'exploratori regis' applied to him in November 1378, when he received payment for coming to the king at Gloucester where the parliament was being held.² In this case, it is fortunate that cross-reference enables one to uncover the identity of a royal spy. Many instances occur of payments made to persons who are merely named as recipients; it is impossible to tell which of these are spies unless other evidence exists to corroborate it. Possibly many secret agents will continue to go undetected by researchers due to the absence of further evidence.

This is the problem, but despite the reticence on the part of the English crown to refer to its agents, a number of names have come down to us. The names of the agents sent out by Frank de Hale in 1370 were not recorded, nor were the names of those sent by William de la Pole in March 1339 to spy on the disposition of enemy galleys in Norman ports.³ However, in November 1337 it is known that Edward III paid 60s. expenses to one of his agents, John le Taverner, 'qi nous envoiasmes nadgaires as parties de France pour noz busoignes', and who was captured by the French at Whitsand and imprisoned.⁴ It appears that Edward III maintained agents in his pay within the Free Companies in France. In February 1370 two such agents, Roger Hilton and John de Neuby, 'esquiers de la grande compaignie' brought the king and Council news from Normandy 'de certaines secrees busoignes dont ils furent chargez depart nous',

1. P.R.O., E.403/472, m.1.

2. P.R.O., E.403/471, m.8. He was also described as 'explorator regis' on 14 July 1379 (ibid., m.13).

3. See above, p. 293, nn. 2, 4.

4. P.R.O., E.404/3/21.

for which they received £100 'de nostre doun.'¹

In the years 1377-78, one Nicholas Hakenet or Hakynet of France, 'explorator regis', received several payments for intelligence work carried out in the king's service. On 21 September 1377 he received 10 marks for going 'ad partes transmarinas ad explorandum de flota navium Francie, et de ordinacione inimicorum regis in eisdem partibus'. An interesting point about this entry is that receipt was made by the hand of the same Nicholas Briser who is mentioned above.² Possibly both men were involved in some kind of organised spy-network, but evidence is too slight to allow one to draw further conclusions. On 23 November he received expenses 'de dono regis' for 'morando in Londonia ibidem expectando voluntatis ipsius domini regis et consilii sui',³ and he received five marks on 12 December and again on 29 January 1378 for going at the Council's instigation 'versus partes Francie ad explorandum de ordinacione inimicorum pro guerra in partibus predictas'.⁴ On 25 September 1378 he received a further 40s. 'pro tempore quo stetavit Londonie, attendens voluntatem consilii regis'.⁵ Among other names which have come down to us include those of Frederick

1. P.R.O., E.404/10/65. Were these esquires employed by the king to spy on the companies? Edward III may only have been following Philippe de Mézières' dictum that 'le roy... (a) continuelement ses secretes espies en l'ost pour enquester et espier le gouvernement du chevetaine et comment l'ost se porte' (Le Songe du Vieil Pèlerin, ed. G. W. Coopland (2 vols., Cambridge, 1969), i. 519).

2. P.R.O., E.403/463, m.6.

3. P.R.O., E.403/467, m.8.

4. P.R.O., E.403/467, mm. 10, 14.

5. P.R.O., E.403/468, m.12.

Fullyng and Richard Henley, who were sent from Calais in October 1386 with news 'de exercitu adversarii regis de Francia',¹ and Arnald Turrou, who in the previous October was 'misso apud Mergate in partibus de Pycardye, ad morendum et explorandum in dictis partibus de ordinacione inimicorum de Francia.'²

From the sparse references to spies which remain, one can draw at least a skeletal outline of their activities. A striking factor is that whereas many of the agents employed by the English crown were English nationals, it seems that an extremely large number of them were foreigners, who were ready and willing to take the pay of the English. We have seen above that two Frenchmen, Nicholas Hakenet and Nicholas Briser were active in 1377 and 1378, and were possibly working in conjunction with one another. The large network of agents working on behalf of the English Council in Flanders in 1386-87 seems to have consisted largely of persons of Flemish stock, as the evidence of their names reveals. Apart from Brother Adam Bamford, other persons appearing in the Exchequer accounts as recipients of English wages included William van Oreigne, 'explorator regis', Willekin Erembout, Clay Delit, Rovelkin le Lit, Henry Baylew, Lievin Leleu and Peter Wenk.³ Employment of foreigners as agents of the English had positive advantages: they spoke the language as natives, and would thus arouse less suspicion than strangers would with the enemy

1. P.R.O., E.403/515, m.1.

2. P.R.O., E.403/510, m.6.

3. Palmer, England, France, and Christendom, pp. 123-4, 230-1.

authorities¹; they might even hold positions of importance in their native area, and thus would be even more valuable to their English masters. (In 1387, one English agent, who escaped the vigilance of the Burgundian authorities, was no less a person than Master Nicholas Barbitonser, the clerk of the city of Ghent.²)

Of the activities of the English agents abroad more will be said below. First it is necessary to consider what other media were made use of by the English government for intelligence purposes.

We have seen above that in addition to actual intelligence agents, information of importance to the safety of the realm was also provided by royal messengers and envoys. But in certain cases land-based agents would be of little use, as, for instance, when the enemy fleet was actually at sea. In such cases the crown usually resorted to sending out single ships, or sometimes a small number of ships, to ascertain the position of the enemy fleet, and to discover any other information which might be useful. In August 1377, John Martyn, master of a balinger owned by John Polymond of Southampton, was sent 'in obsequio regis supra mare ad explorandum de factu inimicorum regis'.³ The troubled year of 1386 saw the employment of spy-ships in greatly increased proportions. On numerous occasions ships were either arrested or hired, and then sent out 'ad explorandum de ordinacione Francigenarum et

1. Compare the frequent arrests -- and subsequent orders for the release as being 'of the king's friendship' -- of Hollanders, Zeelanders, and Portuguese in England, on suspicion that they were spies or enemies.

2. Palmer, England, France, and Christendom, p. 230.

3. P.R.O., E.403/463, m.5.

Flandrencium, ac aliorum inimicorum Francie et Flandrie, et ad certificanda nova explorata predicta consilio regis cum omni festinatione possibili deferenda'.¹

There were also other sources by which the English crown gathered information. Merchants and other travellers, whose business took them overseas, would almost certainly pick up scraps of information on their journeys. If such information were important, and they themselves were loyal subjects, there was a strong chance that they would report their findings to someone in authority, particularly when there was the possibility of financial reward. It was merchants in Gascony who were responsible in 1377 for the warning that the French were planning to launch an attack on West Wales. Having heard a rumour to this effect, they quickly informed Sir Thomas Felbrigg at Bordeaux, and he, without delay, passed the information on to the royal Council, 'ensi que le rumour en est durement grande et notaire'.² In June 1379 John Buk, one of the king's valets, was sent on order of the Council, in company with some Flemish merchants, with a message to the admirals Thomas Percy and Hugh Calveley, who were with their fleets at Southampton and the Isle of Wight. The Issue Roll entry is not clear about the purpose of the journey, but it is possible that the merchants may have possessed information about the enemy, which the Council wished them to relate to the admirals.³

1. P.R.O., E.403/512, m.23; E.403/515, mm. 8, 10-11.

2. Anglo-Norman Letters and Petitions in All Souls MS. 182, ed. M. D. Legge (Oxford, 1941), pp. 162-6, no. 111.

3. P.R.O., E.403/472, m.7.

Thus, we see that several methods of gathering intelligence were available to the English crown. It is now time to turn to the workings of the royal system of intelligence and to attempt to analyse them. As has been mentioned above, shortage of written evidence makes a detailed analysis difficult. An important asset to English espionage was the possession of the English-held bases in France. Such places afforded footholds within enemy territory from which agents could easily be dispatched, and could also serve as centres for the accumulation of information, which was then passed on to England.¹ The activities of Sir Frank de Hale in 1370 in sending out spies and messengers from Calais have been noted above. The extent of his expenditure upon these agents, which was in excess of £70, reveals the very large scale of espionage operations directed from Calais. Comparison with the total expenditure on ordinary messengers for the same year, 44 Edward III, which amounted to only £183, suggests the existence of a highly organised spy-force operating out of Calais²; and these figures are even more striking when one bears in mind that, as Miss Hill suggests quite logically, a considerable proportion of expenditure on messengers was spent upon a large number of commissions of a special or secret nature undertaken by royal

1. Puiseux, Étude sur une grande Ville de Bois, p. 5. Intelligence brought back to Calais was treated as of the greatest priority, and was acted upon immediately. Part of the defence of William de Weston, arraigned before parliament in 1377 for his surrender of Audruicq, was that a spy had informed him that a great force of enemies was coming to besiege the castle with 'tres-graundes et tres grevoues ordinaances.' De Weston, reckoning that the place was indefensible against cannon, thus surrendered to the force when it arrived (Rot. Parl., iii. 39). In 1385, Calais was the clearing-point for intelligence sent from Ghent concerning events at Ghent and Damme (P.R.O., E.403/508, m.18).

2. Hill, The King's Messengers, p. 98.

messengers, and which lack any further specific details in the entries among the accounts of the Exchequer and Wardrobe. One can get some impression of the extent of espionage activities undertaken by the crown.

The activities of the English spies in France and Flanders receive corroboration from contemporary French and Flemish documentary sources. Frequent references to spies or suspected spies, often coming from English-held territories, occur. At times, the reaction of the French populace and the French authorities to the threat of spies seems to have been one of almost panic. Frequently 'spy-scares' would occur, particularly in border regions such as in the South-West. (Of course, this phenomenon was not unique to France; similar reactions occurred just as often in England.) In September 1359, for example, three inhabitants of the town of Chitry received pardons from the Dauphin Charles for their crime of having killed in error two valets coming from Chablis.¹ (Other pardons were granted at the same time to Jean Lochart, Jean le Charpentier and Person Lambert at Monampteuil, for the similar murder of Lamentier de Clay, whom they took in error for an English spy from Vailly).²

These two examples were not isolated ones by any means. On a less violent level were the numerous denunciations of people suspected by their fellow-men as English agents. The clergy were especially suspect. Pieres le Desouby, a monk, and Richard le Charpentier, were taken in 1345 with an extremely heavily-armed

1. A.N., JJ. 90, fo. 138^v, no. 269.

2. A.N., JJ. 90, fo. 142, no. 275. The three men, at the time of the killing, were engaged in fortifying a church at Monampteuil. They may thus have been justified in suspecting that their victim had come to spy on the progress of the construction. For further examples, see *ibid.*, fo. 118, no. 218, fo. 192^v, no. 377; B.N., MS. fr. 25997/303, no. 3, etc.

escort from Neuilly to Caen for interrogation, on suspicion that they had spied for the English at Neuilly.¹ Any dealings with the enemy, however innocent, cast immediate suspicion. In 1369 Adam Hane, a monk at the monastery of St. Michel at le Tréport, was imprisoned for having had dealings with the Navarrese, although these dealings had merely concerned negotiations for the release of French prisoners held by the Navarrese;² in June 1359 no less a person than the abbess of St. Nicholas at Bar-sur-Aube was indicted on the order of Jean de Chalons, lieutenant of the French king in Sens, Troyes and Chaumont, on suspicion of 'lese-majeste et d'echange de correspondance avec les ennemies'.³ In February of the same year, the unfortunate Evrart Hostelier received the Dauphin's letters of remission after having been arrested as an English agent on his return to France after having lived in England for eighteen years.⁴ Other such examples are numerous. The net result of such evidence indicates the impact which English spies had upon the French populace, and may be taken as an accurate reflection of the extent to which English agents were active in France and the Low Countries.

The usefulness of agents was not, however, restricted to the discovery of information: they were also employed in an offensive role, as agents-provocateurs. As such, their duties might include

1. L. Delisle, Actes Normands de la Chambre des Comptes (Paris, 1881), p. 185.

2. A.N., JJ. 90, fo. 195, no. 386.

3. Ibid., fo. 108^v, no. 197.

4. Ibid., fo. 27, no. 57.

the spreading of false rumours to undermine the morale of the enemy, or to mislead his military commanders. Equally important were liaisons with dissident elements in regions under French control. The Flemish towns provided ample opportunity for this. In the summer of 1385 it is plain that English agents were constantly in contact with the anti-French and anti-Burgundian factions in the towns of Ghent and Damme¹, a connexion retained until the network of agents was uncovered by the Burgundian authorities in 1387.²

But despite these important secondary roles, the principal function of the English agents (and important functions of envoys and messengers) still remained in the discovery of information of possible value to the crown and Council. No less important was the transmission of the intelligence received to those authorities who could best profit by it. We have seen above that the English possessions in France were useful centres for the accumulation of information and for the passing on of the information received there. It is also known that all diplomatic embassies were equipped with a number of lower-ranking officials, who could be dispatched to England should need occur for contact, without disrupting any proceedings with which the higher-ranking ambassadors were dealing. In 1328, for example, Bartholomew de Burghersh, whilst on an embassy to the papal curia at Avignon, felt it necessary to dispatch a messenger from Dover to the king at Stamford to inform him of certain rumours important to the

1. P.R.O., E.403/508, mm. 17-18, 20, 22.

2. See above, pp. 300-1.

royal interest.¹ Good channels of communication were therefore vital to the swift passage of important messages. Of the many crossing-places on the English Channel, the most widely-used was that between Dover and Wissant, situated some miles to the west of Calais.² It probably owed its popularity among English messengers and agents to the fact that it was the shortest route across the Channel, and because both ports were in English hands. Traffic between these two places was irregular, but fees for the passage from England had been regularised by statute, that for a horseman being 2s. and for a footman 6d.³ Where speed was essential, boats could be hired for the crossing, although this was a more expensive practice, fares for a horseman generally costing about one mark.⁴

A posting-system ensuring a rapid message-delivery service to the king from the Captain of Calais was in existence in 1372 between Dover and London. In June of that year the archbishop of Canterbury was ordered to speedily provide any of the king's messengers passing through the city with hackneys at a reasonable price whenever commanded to do so. The city of Rochester received similar instructions.⁵ In May of the following year refinements in the system become evident: writs to the bailiffs of Dover,

1. P.R.O., E.101/309/37, quoted in H. S. Lucas, 'The Machinery of Diplomatic Intercourse', The English Government at Work, ed. Willard and Morris, i. 303.

2. Hill, 'Jack Faukes', p. 24.

3. Stats. Realm, i. 263 (Stat. 4 Ed. III, cap. 8).

4. Hill, 'Jack Faukes', pp. 24-5.

5. C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 399; Foedera, III. ii. 947 (18 June 1372).

Canterbury, Rochester and Southwark contained strict orders to purvey hackneys whenever necessary and at reasonable charges, so that messengers sent to the king by the Captain of Calais and the Treasurer of that town would be ensured a speedy journey from the coast to the capital.¹ Such a system would enable the agent to cover a considerable distance in a surprisingly short time. Possibly, similar systems were in existence on other important roads, too. Evidence suggests that in the reign of Edward I roads from London to Scotland and from London to the Welsh Marches were posted. On post roads, the king's messengers had prior claim to horses, and on those roads where no such system was in operation, the king might give special instructions for horses to be made ready to meet the messenger.² Perhaps certain other roads leading from the coast were also posted. In 1360 the Council, then at Reading, were informed of the French descent upon Winchelsea on the very day it took place.³ The average speed of the ordinary messenger has been estimated at roughly twenty to twenty-five miles per day,⁴ so it is extremely likely that aids such as posting-

1. C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 505.

2. Hill, The King's Messengers, pp. 108-9.

3. The French attack on Winchelsea took place on the morning of Sunday, 15 March 1360 (Walsingham, Hist. Ang., 166; Issue Roll of Thomas de Brantingham, p. 173). On the same day, the Council, over 100 miles away at Reading, received the news, and writs mentioning the attacks were issued, ordering the arrest of every ship and barge available for use against the French. Even English ships on the Flemish coast were to be recalled (Foedera, III. i. 476).

4. Hill, 'Jack Faukes', p. 26; --, The King's Messengers, p. 108; C. A. J. Armstrong, 'Some Examples of the Distribution and Speed of News in England at the Time of the Wars of the Roses', Studies in Medieval History presented to Frederick Maurice Powicke, ed. R. W. Hunt, W. A. Pantin, and R. W. Southern (Oxford, 1948), pp. 429-54, esp. pp. 444-54.

stations were available on the roads between Winchelsea and Reading, since the news of the attack travelled so far in such a short space of time. Speedy conveyance of information was therefore of the highest importance.

It appears that the responsibility for matters of espionage lay, not unnaturally, directly in the hands of the king and his Council. Agents were appointed and sent on missions by the king and Council, and very often, as has been seen above in the case of Nicholas Briser, who travelled to Gloucester in 1378 to impart his information to king and Council, they reported back their findings in person. In September 1386, for example, William Bampton, mayor of the Staple at Middelburg, was ordered to certify the Council 'de ordinacione Francigenarum'.¹ Other such examples are too numerous to record. The Council, too, was further involved in espionage through the fact that all captured enemy spies and suspected persons were usually brought before it for interrogation. Such was the fate of a French herald and a French spy captured on the Scots border in 1377.² Although overall direction of intelligence rested with the king and Council, subordinates, such as commanders of English garrisons in France seem to have been responsible for their agents,³ although, ultimately, all findings would be expected to be reported back to the king and his Council.⁴

1. P.R.O., E.403/512, m. 21.

2. P.R.O., E.403/463, mm. 2, 3.

3. As in the case of William de Weston, p.303, n.1 above.

4. Spies were also employed internally to check on the functions of officials of the crown. In 1335, on report that certain collectors of the subsidy had 'borne themselves ill', agents were appointed to investigate the dealings of the collectors 'as secretly as they can without making inquisition', and to report their findings to the Council (C.P.R., 1334-8, p. 202).

A great deal is known about the payment of royal messengers, largely due to the researches of Miss Hill. The position regarding the payment of spies in the royal service is, however, not so clear. We know that messengers received daily wages at a fixed rate, depending upon their rank, together with annual gifts of shoes and clothing. When on active service, they received, in addition, expenses for travelling, etc.¹ It is uncertain whether the same conditions of service applied to secret agents proper, evidence to determine this being too slight. The Frenchman, Nicholas Briser, was certainly paid a retaining fee of fifty marks a year, and, in addition, also received reimbursements for travelling expenses and other expenses incurred.² The majority of payments made to intelligence agents, however, were usually extraordinary payments 'de dono regis'. Usually they were paid partly as wages and partly in recompense of expenses occurred.³ It is difficult to estimate, therefore, what in fact were the wages which a typical agent might receive. Possibly payments made to the agents were dependent upon results,⁴ although there is no means of corroborating this. One thing is certain, however: a

1. The mid-fourteenth century saw the development of the regular payment of messengers in royal service. See Hill, The King's Messengers, pp. 22 ff., 46-51.

2. P.R.O., E.403/471, mm. 5, 8; E.403/472, mm. 1, 6, 7, 10, 13.

3. P.R.O., E.403/463, m.6; E.403/467, mm. 8, 10, 14; E.403/510, m.6; E.403/515, m.1; E.404/10/65.

4. English kings customarily rewarded foreign messengers with money or valuables de dono regis (e.g., P.R.O., E.404/6/36, 58, 60). Such gifts may well have been rewards for the messengers' having passed on news items of interest to the king. Payment of messengers by the recipient was, however, a widespread, standard practice (e.g., Exeter R.O., Exeter Receiver's Account Rolls, 31-2 Ed. III, 33-4 Ed. III).

substantial amount was spent annually on the needs of espionage. It has been noted above that the 110 marks paid to Sir Frank de Hale, for expenditure on spies at Calais, amounted to almost half the total expenditure on all messengers for the same year. And it is important to bear in mind that this sum of over £70 was spent on agents based in Calais alone: it did not include payments made to other agents at work elsewhere. The question now remains to be answered, did the results of espionage justify expenditure upon it, and just how far can agents reports be judged as accurate?

In making an assessment of the success of the English agents' activities and of the reliability of their reports one again encounters difficulty owing to the lack of concrete evidence. The numerous predictions in royal writs sent to the sheriffs and other officials of impending enemy attack may be taken as an indication of the extent to which intelligence sources were used: the king must have got his information from somewhere. These writs are typified by their use of such stock phrases as 'intelleximus quod ...', 'pro certo dicitur', etc. Representative of preambles to such writs is that contained in the precept sent to the keepers of the Maritime lands in the Sussex Rapes in 1343. It explained that:

'Quia pro certo iam noviter intelleximus quod galee guerrine in non modico minimo, cum magna multitudine armatorum de longinquis partibus venientes versus Angliam se properant ad navigium regni nostri Anglie destruendum, et idem regnum invadendum, et nobis et nostris mala et facinora que poterint inferendum, tam in terra quam in mare.' ¹

It will require closer examination to determine just how accurate such descriptions were, or whether, in fact, they were a mere

1. P.R.O., C.76/23, m.20.

convention intended, by deliberate exaggeration, to impress upon the populace the gravity of the situation, and, thereby, to encourage them to greater diligence for defence of the realm.

Probably, a certain degree of propaganda is to be found behind these writs: but it would be wrong to dismiss such writs as completely propaganda. The precept sent to the sheriffs of England in 1338 ordered them to take the usual measures for defence: all fencible men were to be arrayed, beacons to be erected, and so forth. As usual, the writ related that the king had received information concerning the enemy, who had:

'... congregata immensa multitudine galearum et navium, tam supra mare, quam in quibusdam portibus partium exterarum mala et facinora quae poterunt nobis et nostris, tam in terra, quam in mare ...' ¹

At first glance it certainly appears that this description may contain certain elements of exaggeration. Comparison of available French sources for 1338 reveals that the description contained in the preamble of the enemy's intentions was accurate down to the smallest detail. It is well known to modern historians that Philip VI had, since 1336, been preparing a fleet for the invasion of England (although ostensibly for the purpose of a crusade) under the command of the notorious Quiéret, Béhuchet and Barbenoire. Official French sources corroborate that from 1334 onwards, there had been considerable activity in the naval sphere, activity chiefly focussed around the Clos des Galées at Rouen, which, at this time, was developing as a royal arsenal and supply centre under the guidance of its master, Thomas Fouques. The years 1336-8 saw a very great deal of activity at the Clos des Galées

1. Foedera, II. ii. 1055.

on the fitting out and equipping of a fleet which could be used for the invasion of England.¹

Thus, from the magnitude of these French preparations alone, one can see that in its general content the preamble to the writ certainly did not exaggerate the extent of the threatened danger. Further examination of the evidence reveals that the warning embodied in the writ was accurate down to the smallest detail. The writ mentioned that the enemy fleet was composed of both ships and galleys. Since the Clos de Galées was responsible for fitting out the fleet, one might take the impression that such a fleet was composed entirely of galleys. The name is, however, a slight misnomer, since the clos dealt with other types of ship. Many references occur during this same year to the preparation at the clos of nefs, barges and galiots, and of smaller vessels such as batels and batelines, as well as that of actual galleys, such as those hired in the previous year from Genoa.²

The 1338 writ further contained information that the French were believed to be preparing their immense fleet in a number of ports across the Channel. One can see from the sources quoted above that, in addition to the preparations at Rouen, there was a great deal of similar activity at Harfleur, Leure, Dieppe and certain lesser ports along the Norman coast at that time. As the

1. B.N., MS. fr. 25996/126-9, 139-41, 152-3, etc.; n. acq. fr. 3653, p. 21, no. 79; *ibid.*, 3654, p. 2, nos. 8, 10, 11; C. de Beaurepaire, 'Recherche sur l'Ancien Clos des Galées', Précis de l'Acad. des Travaux, Sciences, Belles-Lettres, et Arts de Rouen (1863-4), p. 14. See also Table 1.

2. B.N., MS. fr. 25996/127, 129, 167 (nefs); 160 (barges); 140, 182 (galiots); 166, 173-4 (batels); 153 (batelines); A.N., Marine B.⁶ 136 -- Galères, 1337 (galleys).

English were to discover in 1346, when the capture of Caen by Edward III's army yielded up a document containing the French ordinance for the invasion of England in 1338,¹ the information contained in the writ of 1338 mentioned above was accurate in its finest detail. The invasion may not have actually materialised, but preparation for it there had been, and Edward III and his Council were duly warned of the impending danger by their agents.²

It may be safely deduced, then, that the crown had available reliable sources of information, as reflected by passages contained in royal writs issued for defence. Of course, the system was not foolproof: agents frequently blundered; intelligence was partially defective twice in 1338, when unexpected French attacks were made on Portsmouth and Southampton; again, in 1360, the French descended upon Winchelsea without warning, and took both the government and the defenders by surprise. But it seems reasonable to suppose that intelligence reports were, on the whole, fairly accurate, and if the warnings embodied in the numerous defensive writs are accepted as being made as a result of intelligence, then it is obvious that intelligence played a role of the greatest importance in the defence of the realm in the fourteenth century.

As a Threat to National Security

We have seen above how valuable a role an intelligence network

1. Rot. Parl., ii. 158-9; Black Book of the Admiralty, i. 420-5.

2. Among these agents were probably ones such as the two messengers sent to Normandy in the following year to find news of the French galleys in ports there (P.R.O., E.36/203, m.112v).

played in the defence of England in the fourteenth century. There was, however, another side to the coin: spies in the pay of the enemy presented a very serious threat to national security. As a result, the government, strongly influenced by public opinion, particularly in parliament, was obliged to take stringent measures to counter such menace. For it was not merely the attacks and depredations on the English coast by the French and their allies which caused headaches for the central and local administration; enemies also presented a more sinister threat from within the realm itself.

English documentary evidence from this period testifies to the extensive use of secret agents by the French and other enemies of England, both in England itself, and within the English-held towns and fortresses on the continent. Time and time again the presence of the enemy aliens made itself felt: in writs from the crown stressing the dangers of such persons, in statutes aimed at curtailing their activities, in reports of frequent arrests and detention of suspects, and, most significantly, in the complaints of the commons in parliament. It is, perhaps, all too easy to dismiss such references as the manifestations of a fear which gripped a crown and populace subjected to prolonged war. This interpretation might certainly hold good for the period after 1369, when the English reversals in the war were accompanied by an increased preoccupation with the needs of home defence, and, significantly, with the threat presented by enemy agents. The frequency of false arrests of persons suspected as enemy spies suggests that in many instances there was no foundation for such fears. Notwithstanding such possible interpretations, it is

certain that the spy-threat, as reflected in English records from this period, was a very real one. French sources reveal that agents were indeed employed against the English in a number of ways. For example, agents were frequently sent to the English possessions such as Calais to uncover information¹; they were also used against English forces in the field. The troops sent to aid the Gantois at Damme in 1385 came under the surveillance of agents sent by Philip the Bold to discover the 'temps que les Anglois arriverent ou port de Hugheuliet'.² Most serious by far to English security, however, were those agents sent directly to England to discover the nation's secrets -- spies such as those sent by Louis de Mâle to London in 1382;³ or the Burgundian spies sent in the early fifteenth century to discover news of the English army in London;⁴ or the agents sent to Scotland in 1354 to persuade the Scots to stir up trouble in the north of England.⁵

It is certain, then, that the numerous arrests, complaints, and other measures taken against spies between the late 1330s and 1389 did indeed have some positive foundation, and, from the extent of such measures employed, it is equally certain that the menace presented by enemy espionage was taken very seriously. Royal

1. E.g., Arch. Dép., Nord, B.15796, m.6^v. French castles and fortresses were important bases for espionage. See Alban and Allmand, 'Spies and Spying', p. 88.

2. Arch. Dép., Nord, B.1842/50006. For similar examples, see *ibid.*, B.1845/50283; B.N., MS. fr. 25996/240-1.

3. Palmer, England, France and Christendom, pp. 245-7.

4. Arch. Dép., Nord, B.1933, fos. 62^v, 77.

5. Chronique Normande du XIV^e Siècle, ed. A. and E. Molinier (Paris, 1882), pp. 108-9.

writes from this period carried, with frightful regularity, the startling information that enemy aliens were 'spying on the secrets of the realm, and sending intelligence home'¹, or, as in 1380, 'that divers aliens, enemies of the realm, have entered, and daily enter the realm to spy out its secrets and reveal them to the French; and that forgers of the seals of the Pope, archbishops and bishops, counterfeiters of bulls, etc., are deceiving the people, and sending abroad bullion ...'² These were by no means isolated examples. One need only consult the Calendar of Patent Rolls for any year to find similar examples. The government and the people were constantly reminded of this threat from enemy spies.

The records of parliament testify, perhaps better than any other source, the extent to which Englishmen held enemy aliens in fear and suspicion. Scarcely a parliament took place during this period without some reference to aliens being made, and to the dangers with which they presented the realm. Much of this was the result of a prejudice purely racial in its concept, although, indubitably, a prejudice fostered by prolonged war. Falling into this category were provisions prompted by nationalistic jealousy, coupled with the desire to prevent aliens receiving benefits which more fittingly should have gone to native Englishmen. Thus, in 1347, the commons complained against the pope's appointing aliens to English benefices and monastic houses,³ and the parliament of 1379 saw a similar petition that none of the best benefices should

1. C.D.S., iii. 294, no. 1614.

2. C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 475. Numerous other references occur, e.g., C.C.R., 1341-3, p. 485; C.P.R., 1358-61, p. 284; C.P.R., 1381-5, pp. 350, 585, etc.

3. Rot. Parl., ii. 171.

be granted to alien clergy.¹ But although much was based on prejudice, the greater part of the commons' complaints regarding aliens during this period were most certainly prompted by reasons of national security. In 1338 it was asked that all prelates certify parliament of the numbers, names and whereabouts of any clergy in their dioceses;² in 1344, the commons petitioned that the crown take in hand the goods and lands of aliens within the realm, and that the profits from these be 'tournez a la defens de la terre et de Seinte Eglise';³ in 1373, the commons entered a petition that alien clergy living within twenty leagues of the coast should be removed, since they 'espiant les secretz et ordynancez de temps en temps a vostre Parliament et Conseil';⁴ a grievance levelled at aliens in 1377 was that they entered the realm as spies.⁵

Common opinion thus viewed the situation as one of extreme gravity, and the central government was not slow to take action against the threat of espionage. Although an official declaration to the intent was never made, it is clear that the various fields in which enemy agents were liable to operate were recognised by the government, as one can see from the steps taken to counter enemy operations in each of these fields. In brief, the measures taken by king and Council were directed against four main sources of danger:

1. Leakage of information to enemies outside the realm -- this meant preventing spies from entering the realm in the first place

1. Ibid., iii. 46. See also p.330,n. 6 below.

2. Ibid., ii. 106.

3. Ibid., ii. 154.

4. Ibid., ii. 320.

5. Ibid., ii. 22.

if this were possible, or, if they were already at work within the realm, preventing them from getting out with their information;

2. Control of alien clergy, who constituted a threat which was not always recognised;

3. Prevention of undesirable literature and other material entering the country -- this usually concerned anti-government propaganda in the form of 'prejudicial bulls', and also the prevention of the spreading of rumours (whether true or false) which might have had a detrimental effect upon the morale of the populace;

4. The undermining of the country's economy -- this included measures taken against the importation of inferior (usually Scots) coinage, and the exportation of bullion (whether in specie or plate), and also the exportation of arms or victuals.

In such a system, the ports of entry played a vital role. It was here that the first steps were taken to counter the activities of enemy agents, and strict security here was thus essential. Entry and exit to and from the realm were frequently restricted, and, on times, completely prohibited. When, for example, there was a naval expedition in the offing, the crown frequently resorted to a complete ban on all persons or shipping wishing to leave the country. When the Edwardian fleet set sail in July 1346, orders were sent to the mayor and sheriffs of London, and to officials in the Cinque Ports, especially Dover, Winchelsea and Sandwich, that no-one of any condition whatsoever be allowed to leave the realm for eight days after the departure of the king's fleet, since 'intelleximus quod quamplures exploratores in civitate predicta [London] et alibi infra regnum nostrum Anglie conversantes secreta nostra ad partes externas ad inimicos nostros ... mittunt.'¹

1. P.R.O., C.76/23, m.23^v. Shortly afterwards, the sheriffs of London were informed that French spies had infiltrated the kingdom (C.C.R., 1346-9, p. 149).

General prohibitions on persons leaving the realm were implemented for other reasons. The ports could be closed to all pilgrims, as in 1348.¹ On other occasions, exit of persons was permitted, but only from certain specified ports. The chief of these was usually Dover, but occasionally other ports such as Orwell might also serve as controlled exit points.² Notwithstanding royal proclamations announcing to the populace the news of the closure of the ports, many people attempted to leave the realm, or to export prohibited goods 'contra proclamacionem'.³

Occasionally, exceptions to the general ordinance were made. Often the bailiffs or wardens of the ports were instructed to permit 'known merchants' to leave,⁴ and licences were frequently granted by the crown for more specific reasons. In 1368, the prior of Arundel was granted licence to go to Rome 'pour aucunes busoignes tuchantz sa priorte',⁵ an interesting licence, this, since it shows that even in peace time the restrictions could be in force. Licences were granted for numerous other reasons: in December 1381, a writ of Privy Seal sent to the Chancery directed that:

'Soit fait une brief hors del chancelrie direct as gardeyns du port de Douvre pour Johan Myners et son conseil, ove xij chevaux et autres biens que sont en sa compaignie, la quel est ordene d'aler a Caleys pour soi defendre illoeqes d'un appelle en gage de bataille.'⁶

1. P.R.O., C.76/26, m.16^v.

2. C.C.R., 1381-5, p.1.

3. P.R.O., E.364/12, mm. 1, 4, 5^v.

4. E.g., P.R.O., E.364/3, m.1. The prohibition against emigration of February 1383, however, stressed that even known merchants were to be prevented from leaving the ports (C.C.R., 1381-5, p.281).

5. P.R.O., C.81/1712/5.

6. P.R.O., C.81/1656/6.

Sometimes, an applicant for a licence had to provide mainpernors to vouch for his integrity before the licence was granted.¹

Such measures were undertaken for a variety of reasons, and not merely to prevent leakage of information to an enemy abroad. Enemy aliens repeatedly attempted to smuggle out bullion, arms and victuals. By various statutes, exportation of important items such as bullion and arms had been restricted: the statute De Falsa Moneta of Edward I's reign had forbidden export of English coin of the realm;² further statutes of 9, 17 and 38 Edward III, and of 5 Richard II had placed restrictions on other items such as arms and armour.³ Parliament in 1380 added its voice to the outcry against the export of bullion.⁴ Particularly frowned upon was the exportation of arms to the enemy, but although stringent measures were instituted to restrict its export, it is clear that some did elude the government's controls.⁵ From time to time, more specific instructions would be issued. In 1341, for example, export of corn, victuals or armour to enemies in Scotland, France or Norway was prohibited.⁶

1. P.R.O., C.81/1715/19.

2. Stats. Realm, i. 132 (Stat. 37 Ed.I).

3. Ibid., pp. 273-4 (9 Ed.III, stat. 2, caps. 1, 9, 10). Of course, such legislation aided the crown in the apprehension of persons contravening customs and staple regulations: otherwise 'loyal' Englishmen were not averse to making their profits at the crown's expense, even if that profit were to be made by exporting arms to the enemy.

4. Rot. Parl., iii. 82.

5. E.g., C.D.S., iii. 304, no. 1656 gives the account of arms seized by the authorities between 1343 and 1357, and which were intended for the Scots.

6. C.P.R., 1340-2, p. 212. From the thirteenth century the Norwegians and Danes had moved in the sphere of French and Scottish influence, and, as such, were enemies of England. See Ch.II, p. 34.

The measures taken at the ports were not just intended to prevent persons from leaving the realm, or from exporting prohibited articles from it, but were also aimed at the prevention of the entry of aliens or undesirable material into the country. This is made quite clear in the commissions appointing searchers of bullion in the ports. These commissions, which echo the provisions contained in the above-mentioned statutes, (which were themselves also concerned with unlawful entry or imports into the realm), usually granted powers:

'de scrutinio auri et argenti in moneta, massa vel plata, ac iocalium et litterarum combitorum extra regnum Anglie ad partes externas contra proclamacionem regis traducendorum; necnon de bonis et catallis hominum de curia Romana, aut aliis partibus transmarinis ad dictum regnum regis veniencium, seu de eodem regno transmucium secum litteras patentes, bullas, instrumenta processus, seu aliqua alia regi, aut regno dicto suo, vel subditis suis preiudicala, contra formam statuti regis.'¹

The entry into the realm of spies was certainly not desired by the crown. Not only were the secrets of the realm at peril, but the spies could firmly establish themselves, and set up organizations to undermine the security of the king and country. Collaborations occurred, such as the one uncovered in London in 1346, whereby the agents involved had 'hung out on a lance the shield of the arms of some great Scots lord, so that the king's enemies might know their retreat.'²

No less a threat was the entry of 'prejudicial bulls' into the country. These might jeopardize the position of the crown, or even lower the morale of the people. Hence the numerous appearances on record of persons arrested for bringing such bulls

1. P.R.O., E.364/3, m.1.

2. C.D.S., iii. 268, no. 1472.

into the country, persons like the Gascon clerk, 'qi vint ovesque bulles de par l'antipape en nostre royaume,' and who was immediately arrested in 1379, and sent before the royal Council at Gloucester for interrogation.¹ But it was not just bulls that the government had to fear: there was also the possibility that rumour, regarded by governments from the reign of Edward I as a very serious evil, might creep into the realm via the attentions of enemy agents.² Rumours (whether true or false) could be a severe blow to the morale of the people, particularly in a region such as the south-east, or on the Scottish border, both of which suffered heavily from enemy attacks. The Statute of Westminster of 1275 had discriminated against 'devisors of tales', decreeing that 'from henceforth, none shall be so hardy to tell or publish any false news or tales, whereby discord, or occasion of discord or slander may grown between king and realm.'³ Repeatedly during the fourteenth century the government issued orders that this clause of the statute be upheld -

'Mandatus est omnibus vicecomitibus Anglie quod inviolabiliter observacionem factam Statuti Wintoniensis [sic] tempore regni regis Edwardi I de rumoribus non insurgendis, unde discordia aut scandalum ... possit inter regem et populum.'⁴

Punishments for the spreading of such rumours were, indeed, heavy. In May 1383, Thomas Depham of Norfolk was gaoled for declaring

1. P.R.O., E.404/10/70/20.

2. And not just enemy agents. Englishmen spreading rumours detrimental to the crown were swiftly dealt with. See Select Cases in the Court of King's Bench, ed. Sayles (Selden Soc., 1939), iii, p. cxi.

3. Stats. Realm, i.35 (Stat. 3 Ed.III, cap.34).

4. B.L., Cotton MS. Julius C. iv, fo. 8.

that news which had been received of the bishop of Norwich's 'crusade' in Flanders was false.¹ In June of that year, a Welshman, Hugh de la Pole, was sentenced to the pillory for having invented tales concerning the taking of Ypres by the bishop of Norwich, and to give credence to his story, he showed a false wound. What probably sealed his fate with the authorities was the fact that he had told his listeners that dissension had broken out within the ranks of the English army at the siege. Obviously an example had to be made to deter future carriers of rumour, otherwise, 'the same city, by such lies so fabricated, might easily be elsewhere defamed, as the planner and inventor thereof', but what was far more serious was that 'the whole kingdom might easily be disturbed or disquieted thereby.'²

There also lay an economic reason behind such measures. Foreign governments, and particularly that of Scotland, were ever ready to flood England with coins of inferior quality. Alien coinage with an inferior silver content had been a problem for successive monarchs since the thirteenth century. The statutes De Moneta and De Falsa Moneta of Edward I's reign had legislated against it.³ The problem increased during the fourteenth century,

1. Cal. Plea and Memoranda Rolls of London, iii. 36.

2. Memorials of London and London Life, ed. Riley, pp. 479-80. One of the more serious charges levelled at the anti-Lancastrian conspirators in Essex in 1404 was that they had spread the rumour that Richard II was alive, 'et a partibus borealibus in Angliam cum maxima multitudine populi Francigenorum, Scotorum et Wallicorum remaret ad statum suum regium reoptinendum' (Select Cases in the Court of King's Bench, ed. Sayles (Selden Soc., 1971), vii. 153, no. 26).

3. Stats. Realm, i. 131 (Stat. 27 Ed.I), 219 (t. Ed.I).

and it is tempting to think that the Scots did have some deliberate motive of damaging the English economy. The English certainly believed so: commissions to search for enemy aliens, prejudicial bulls, and other security measures regularly contained powers to search for false money also.¹ Proclamations were repeatedly made against the importation of Scots coinage,² but eventually realizing the losing battle being fought, the English were compelled to declare that the Scottish groat then in circulation was to be worth only 3d. sterling. The statute of 1373 which introduced this legislation, made provision that should the Scottish coinage become further debased, then its value should be adjusted proportionately against the groat sterling.³ Although base coinage of other provenance was also legislated against, documentary evidence reveals that Scottish coins formed the greater percentage of inferior specie introduced into English. The account of John Clerk, bailiff of Pontefract, concerning the seizure of 'monete de cuneo Scocie et aliarum terrarum exter~~narum~~' from December 1367 to Michaelmas 1369, showed that during this period eleven gross in Scots silver coin was seized, but the amount of other foreign specie seized was nil.⁴

1. A complaint made in 1375 was that the Scots had flooded Ireland with their base coinage (C.C.R., 1374-7, pp. 202-3).

2. E.g., C.D.S., iv. 405; C.C.R., 1385-9, p. 441.

3. Stats. Realm, i. 395 (Stat. 47 Ed. III, cap. 2). In 1390, Scots coins were declared to be worth half their face value (ibid., ii. 77 (Stat. 14 R.II, cap. 12)), and by statute of 17 Richard II, it was declared that there were to be no further exchanges between the currencies (ibid., p. 87).

4. P.R.O., E.364/12, m.7. This account was made as the result of the royal proclamation against importation of foreign moneys of 8 December 1367. Transgressors against the proclamation did so at risk of life and limb, or forfeit of their possessions (E.371/126, m.37).

Scrutiny at the ports was undertaken by several officials. The crown often commissioned the mayor and bailiffs of the port, or the sheriff of the county to seize prohibited imports and exports, and to prevent persons and shipping from leaving the realm.¹ Sometimes, the king's serjeants-at-arms were commissioned as above.² Regularly employed also were the collectors of customs and subsidies in the ports. Although their main job was in the field of royal revenue, the nature of their employment did not differ too greatly from that of persons employed in national security. The comptus of William Spaigne and his colleagues, collectors of the customs in Boston, for the period from Michaelmas 1378 to the same feast, 1379, revealed that in addition to their customs duties, they also made searches for bullion and bulls being sent to Scotland.³ Similarly, the account of the collectors of the Petty Custom in the Port of London in 1372 recorded seizures of 'equis, jumentis, armaturis, arcubus et sagittis extra regnum Anglie ad partes externas contra proclamacionem regis inde factam traducendis,' and of gold and silver in coin, plate and bullion.⁴

The officials mainly concerned, however, were the searchers of bullion, who were appointed in the ports and also in inland towns. The method of appointing these persons varied, as did the terms of their appointments. Such terms did, however, remain fundamentally similar. These searchers were always directly accountable at the Exchequer, and all moneys seized by them were

1. C.P.R., 1385-9, pp. 83, 172; P.R.O., E.364/3, m.1.

2. C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 475.

3. P.R.O., E.364/13, m.2. See also E.364/3, m.1.

4. P.R.O., E.364/6, m.8^v.

delivered to the mint to be melted down and recoin¹. They operated quite independently of the customs system, and, during the earlier part of the century, were quite different officials from the searchers for smuggled wools and merchandise. But as the century progressed, definitions between these different sets of officials became blurred, and gradually temporary mergers took place. Thus, by the 1370s, searchers were being appointed to search for a number of things: in 1372 Nicholas Potyn was appointed to search ships of all suspected persons for non-customed wools, woolfells, etc., bullion, jewels, money or plate, and prejudicial bulls, and his findings were to be certified to the Chancery.² Terms of appointments kept constantly changing. 1385 saw the appointment in Holland, Lincolnshire, of separate classes of searchers for uncocked wools and other merchandise, for the apprehension of spies and bulls, and for the seizure of bullion, while in Northampton, in the same year, a single commission was issued to the mayor and bailiffs, embracing the search for spies, bullion, and counterfeiters, etc.³

Prominent among the contravenors against such ordinances were pilgrims and clergy. Alien clergy were singularly discriminated against by the government's security measures, in many cases with good reason. Repeatedly, reports stated that friars and other

1. A. Beardwood, 'The Royal Mints and Exchanges', The English Government at Work, iii. 53. The wages of such searchers were set by statute: in 1331, they were to receive every tenth penny of moneys seized, and in 1335 this was increased to every fourth penny (ibid., p.55).

2. P.R.O., E.364/11, m.1. Compare the appointment of searchers at Dartmouth in 1378 (E.364/12, m.4).

3. C.P.R., 1385-9, p.83.

alien clergy entered and left England daily, thus causing that 'the secrets of the realm are laid bare by such aliens to the king's enemies, to the peril of the realm.'¹ General anti-clerical feeling, which was widespread, no doubt had some bearing on the attitude towards alien clergy. But clergy, and more especially members of the mendicant orders, with their relative freedom of movement, were in a good position to act as agents. More than one case testifies to the veracity of this statement. In 1369, the alien prior of Hayling in Hampshire was confined at his own costs in Southwark priory, for having received letters from France;² in 1384, the keeper of the Channel Islands, Hugh Calveley, was ordered to arrest without delay a French spy named Laurence Pussyn of Normandy, who had 'craftily intruded' into the church of St. Peter Port by means of a papal provision, and had since been spying out the secrets of the English in Guernsey.³

This explains to a large extent the preoccupation with alien clergy in the parliaments of the reigns of Edward III and Richard II, and also the large number of measures levelled against them. Heads of monasteries often received orders to refuse admittance to their houses to alien clergy. The prior of Holy Trinity at York was ordered to do so in 1340;⁴ the Dominican convent at Oxford

1. C.C.R., 1381-5, p.64.

2. C.C.R., 1369-74, p.63. This case was cited in parliament in 1379 as proof that alien clergy were in contact with the enemy (Rot. Parl., iii. 64).

3. C.P.R., 1381-5, p.35.

4. C.C.R., 1339-41, p.458.

received similar orders in 1373, on information received by the king that alien spies were active in Oxford under the pretext of studying there;¹ again, in 1382, the warden and convent of Friars Minor in London were told that no alien bretheren, 'coming from what realm or lordship soever' should remain in the house for longer than two days, and that those already there should be removed without delay.² Apart from individual clergy, whole houses or 'alien priories' suffered from the government's security measures. Alien houses presented an especial risk, particularly in coastal regions. Periods of open war saw numerous confiscations of lands of the alien priories, and the removal of alien clergy from the coastal area. The removal of the aliens from the maritime lands may be traced back as far as 1295. In this year, the principle was established that in times of crisis, the coastal tract of England was to be free of any alien (or, more specifically, French) clergy.³ Such a practice was repeated in 1326, when the country was gripped by the fear of invasion from France by Queen Isabella. At this time, it was decided that all secular beneficed clergy who were 'subjects and adherents of the king of France, living near the sea or navigable rivers', were to be taken from the coastal region, and accommodated inland for the duration of the troubles.⁴ With the re-commencement of hostilities in the 1330s, the principle was maintained. In July 1337, all alien

1. C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 517.

2. C.C.R., 1381-5, p. 64.

3. D. J. A. Matthew, The Norman Monasteries and their English Possessions (Oxford, 1962), pp. 82-4.

4. C.C.R., 1325-7, p.636. Secular clergy only were involved since, presumably, any actions taken by alien regular clergy in an English house could be curtailed by its head.

priorities in the Isle of Wight were taken into the king's hands, and their clergy removed from the sea,¹ a fate shared by the monks of St. Michael's Mount and the denizen priory of Lewes in the following year.² The principles remained very much in force throughout the fourteenth century, pressure to implement them being frequently applied by successive parliaments. In 1346, the commons petitioned that all alien clergy leave England by Michaelmas, and that the priories be given to Englishmen.³ In the following year, they complained of the pope's collating aliens to English monasteries and benefices.⁴ In 1369, 1372 and 1373 further security measures against the alien clergy were petitioned for.⁵ Finally, in the first parliament of Richard II's reign, expulsion from England of all enemy aliens was ordained in reply to a commons' petition.⁶ Although at first sight the decision

1. P.R.O., C.61/49, m.19. On the same day, a similar fate was shared by alien clergy 'de potestate et dominio regis Francie' throughout England and Wales (ibid., m. 23).

2. Foedera, II. ii. 1061.

3. Rot. Parl., ii. 162-3.

4. Ibid., p. 171.

5. Ibid., pp. 300, 312, 320.

6. Ibid., iii. 22. The parliament of 1376 had also seen stern measures levelled at the aliens. The economic damage which they did to the realm was also stressed, the English Church being 'plus destruyt par tielx malveis Cristiens qe par touz les Jewes et Saracyns du monde' (ibid., p. 338). These demands were repeated in the last parliament of Edward III's reign (ibid., pp. 367, 372-3).

taken at this parliament seems the most positive step taken to counter the menace of alien clergy, it was not really as effective as it appears: it by no means meant total expulsion. Exemptions included conventual priors, known loyalists and married secular clergy, who were to provide sureties for good behaviour, and were not to leave England or to send letters abroad without first showing them to the king. In addition, although all other aliens were to be out of the realm by Candlemas, 1378, it is patently obvious that many still remained in England after this date. In 1379 the commons could complain that aliens still remained in England, to the great peril of the realm,¹ and in the 1380s, discrimination in parliament against alien clergy remaining in England persisted.²

Parliamentary activity directed at the alien clergy provides one with a fair indication of the popular feeling in England towards the fortunes of war. Measures against the alien clergy were numerous in the initial stages of the war, but the incidence of references to them declined as the English gained military supremacy after the mid-1340s. The period following the renewal of war in 1369 saw, however, a pronounced increase in attention given to this particular problem, (as indeed it was to the whole question of national defence). This is perhaps best typified in the measures of expulsion adopted in the 1377 parliament, (a parliament whose main business was preoccupied with the reversals of war, and the need for sterner defensive measures), which,

1. Ibid., p. 64.

2. E.g., in 1380, the commons petitioned that aliens who were priors should be removed from their houses (ibid., p. 96).

despite the fact that they were not totally effective, certainly represented a much tougher attitude on the part of the government towards this issue. The implied leniency (or perhaps inefficiency) of the 1377 ordinance is to an extent offset by the fact that the aliens who were permitted to remain were subject to stringent controls on their freedom of movement. The 1377 provision amplified an order of 1369, whereby alien priors, to whom the custody of their houses was committed, were bound to find mainpernors to swear that: the prior would remain continually in his house, and would maintain the number of monks and lay servants there; he would found chantries from the issues of the priory, and maintain the priory buildings in a good state of repair; and, most important of all, 'neither the prior, monks or servants would pass out of the realm, or reveal the state, affairs or secrets of the realm to any foreign person, or transmit to foreign parts by letter or word of mouth, or otherwise any gold or silver in mass or money, or any jewels, armour, etc., or any thing prejudicial'; he was also to pay the yearly farm, and not to alienate the goods of the priory.¹ Aliens were not, in addition, to be involved in the keeping of the sea-coast: in 1379, the alien priory of Pembroke was committed to its prior, John Rougecock, with the proviso that he be exempted from contributions of tenths and fifteenths, and also from the garde de la mer.² Nevertheless,

1. C.F.R., 1369-77, pp. 13-17.

2. C.F.R., 1377-83, pp. 155-6. The alien priories themselves were not immune from the attacks of their fellow countrymen. Lewes priory suffered in 1377 when the French descended on Rottingdean and carried off the prior of Lewes, while in 1380, the farm of the alien priory of Sele was reduced 'because certain lands of the priory in Rottingdean have been destroyed by enemies' (Chron. Anglie, p. 168; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 342 (Lewes); C.F.R., 1377-83, p. 198 (Sele)).

alien clergy, despite the measures taken against them, were to remain a security hazard in England until their more complete expulsion in the reign of Henry V.¹

Apart from controls at the ports and concern with alien clergy, other measures were also adopted to counter the threat of espionage. Local officials frequently received commissions with explicit instructions concerning the apprehension of enemy agents. In March 1354, for instance, the mayor and bailiffs of Carlisle received a commission to arrest and imprison all Scots and others spying on the defects of the city walls, and also any others whom they suspected as spies.² Royal and local officials were, in any case, expected to be on the look out for anyone engaged in nefarious activities of any sort, as part of their peace-keeping duties. On other occasions, persons were appointed solely for the purpose of apprehending enemy agents. In 1387, Thomas de Milton was appointed, with four associates, to seek out and arrest all Irish rebels who had entered England as spies.³ Sometimes commissions could direct the arrest of named suspects, as the commission of August 1359 appointing Nigel de Haukynton and others to arrest John de Cornwaille and William de Derby, 'adherents of the king's enemies of France', who were believed to be spying in London or elsewhere.⁴

It was not merely the authorities, however, who were instrumental in the apprehension of enemy spies. The English

1. For a fuller account, see Matthew, The Norman Monasteries, pp. 120, 126-7.

2. C.D.S., iii. 287, no. 1573.

3. C.P.R., 1385-9, p. 265.

4. C.P.R., 1358-61, p. 284.

people were themselves highly aware of the threat to national security presented by such agents. The large numbers of arrests or denunciations made by ordinary citizens testifies to this. In 1380, for example, a number of suspected spies were arrested 'by the men of London.'¹ Contributing to such public awareness was undoubtedly the increasing growth of national feeling (or, more accurately, of anti-French feeling) in England as the century progressed. But there was more to it than that: popular involvement was actively encouraged by crown and council and strongly enforced by statute. The Statute of Winchester had ensured that watches be held in the towns, had imposed curfews, and provided that the most stringent checks be made upon strangers. From time to time, the crown issued decrees that the peace statutes against strangers be re-enforced, as in March 1341, when it was ordered that all strangers were to be arrested by the watch and held until morning, and if suspected, were to be delivered to the sheriff and kept in gaol. In the case of resistance, the hue and cry was to be enforced.² By statute of 9 Edward III, innkeepers were obliged to search their guests, and make report.³ In 1354, every inhabitant of Carlisle, both male and female, was to aid the authorities in the search for enemy spies.⁴ But the main underlying principle continued to be the general obligation to keep the peace, embodied in the

1. C.C.R., 1377-81, p. 416.

2. C.P.R., 1340-3, p. 206.

3. Stats. Realm, i. 273-4 (9 Ed. III, Stat. 2, cap. 11).

4. C.D.S., iii. 287, no. 153.

Statute of Winchester and other statutes.

The extent of activity levelled against enemy spies may be measured by the large numbers of arrests on record. A great many of these were false arrests, based upon unfounded suspicion. Where friend and foe shared a common language, it was difficult to distinguish enemies of Flanders from natives of friendly domains which spoke Netherlandish dialects, or Castilians from Portuguese, whose tongues, to contemporary Englishmen, held little difference to each other. Frequently, the crown issued orders for the release of ships of friendly countries arrested as enemies, or for natives of those countries taken in error for spies. The staplers of Middelburg wrote to Nicholas Brembre in 1381-2, pleading for the release of Henrick Wilde who 'longment est detenuz en prison a Londres, a cause q'il estoit pris en compagnie de Flamyns, et que homme qui doit q'il estoit Flamyng, dount, seignour, vous plese assaver q'il est neez de Zeland, et q'il est cousyn le burghemestre de Middelburghe.'¹ More unfortunate was the case of Stephen Philip, who entered England in 1375, to visit a Norman monk at Long Benington.² Arrested by the sheriffs of London, and imprisoned on suspicion of espionage, it was ordered by the king that he should be released on bail, providing that he was not guilty. Apparently, his release was never secured, an endorsement on the document stating that he was unable to find bail.³ Never the less, a substantial proportion of arrests

1. P.R.O., S.C.1/43/82, p. 83. An item in the Chancery Miscellanea referring to the persons detained by the sheriff of London in 5 Richard II mentioned 'Henricus Wylde de Middelburgh in Seland, detentus et captus ... pro suspicione exploratoracionis' (C.47/28/6/22).

2. C.F.R., 1374-7, p. 139.

3. C.I.M., 1348-77, p. 982.

were made with good reason.

Persons arrested on suspicion of spying were usually sent to the king or his Council, or sometimes both, for interrogation. In February 1341, certain bearers of foreign bulls were to be arrested, and brought before the king and Council by the first Sunday in Lent.¹ In 1378, and again in 1382, all spies and persons carrying bulls were also to be brought before king and Council.² In October 1373, enemy alien friars were to be sent before the Council only for questioning,³ and in 1377, French spies captured on the Scottish border were taken to London and brought before the Council.⁴ Less often, arrested suspects were questioned in Chancery, as in March 1380, when serjeants-at-arms were appointed to arrest alien spies, and to conduct them either to Chancery, or to the king and Council.⁵ Where it was more convenient, captured suspects were brought before other high-ranking or trusted officials, such as the captain of Calais, or wardens of the March, for initial interrogation. They might later be sent before the Council if it was decided that their case was important enough, or if a local issue of small importance, the question might go no further. In 1389, John lord Cobham and Sir William Heroun were sufficient to investigate the case of Hugh Pot of Gelderland, 'pris come espye', who was sent before them 'pour estre examine de certainez piecez ... pris dil dit Hugh'.⁶

1. C.P.R., 1340-3, p. 203.

2. C.P.R., 1377-81, pp. 163, 219; C.P.R., 1381-5, pp. 200, 350, 424.

3. C.C.R., 1369-74, p. 517.

4. P.R.O., E.403/463, m.3.

5. C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 475.

6. P.R.O., C.47/2/49/16.

Spies or suspects awaiting interrogation were held in prison until they could be dealt with. The most usual place of detention in London was Newgate prison. Bearers of prejudicial bulls who were arrested in London were cast into Newgate in 1342, there to await interrogation by the royal Council.¹ In the 1380s, the prison was literally bursting at the seams with spies and suspects held there.² Outside London, royal castles were frequently used to accommodate captured enemy agents. Windsor castle, in 1379, housed more than one French spy.³ The castles of York, Gloucester, Corfe and many others were also employed for the same purpose.⁴

Although evidence shows that spies were held in prison pending questioning by the authorities, it is less easy to discover what punishments were handed out to persons convicted of spying. We have seen above that spreaders of false rumours were liable to gaol or the pillory. Pilgrims and others secretly leaving the realm in 1381 ran the risk of a prison term of one year if detected.⁵ Beyond this, there is little evidence concerning the fate of proven spies, but as far as can be seen, it appears that the crown's policy towards them was fairly lenient. Spying evidently did not possess the stigma which later centuries attached to it. In December 1380, the sheriff of London, on royal instructions, released from Newgate for Christmas, a large number of suspects who had been 'found wandering in that city and

1. C.C.R., 1341-3, p.660.

2. C.C.R., 1377-81, p. 416; C.I.M., 1377-81, pp. 89, 187; Cal. of Plea and Memoranda Rolls of London, 1381-1412, pp. 90-1; R. B. Pugh, Imprisonment in Medieval England (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 106-7.

3. P.R.O., E.404/10/70/20; C.C.R., 1377-81, pp. 174, 319.

4. C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 77 (York, 1338); C.C.R., 1377-81, p. 164 (Gloucester, 1378); C.C.R., 1381-5, p. 364 (Corfe, 1384).

5. C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 1.

repaired thither suddenly, at the time when the galleys were at sea, running hither and thither about the city like spies.'¹ Even convicted spies stood a good chance of receiving a royal pardon. In 1378, Roger Foucate, a dean of St. Émilion, and a spy for the French cardinals, was arrested and imprisoned, and then interrogated sporadically by the Council throughout 1379 and 1380, only to be released in August of 1380.² In 1382, Robert Rillyngton of Scarborough was convicted by the justices of Oyer and Terminer for Yorkshire under the presidency of John of Gaunt, on charges of 'having dealt with the king's enemies, bought of them ships and goods captured from the king's subjects, conveyed victuals and moneys to their ships, and had led them by night to inspect the town and castle of Scarborough, and also of plots against Ralph de Hastynges, late sheriff of York.' In November of that year, he was granted, in return for a fine of 100 marks at the Hanaper, a pardon for these offences, and a second pardon for other offences, chief of which was 'that at the bidding of the king's enemies, he went to sea and traitorously assisted them against the king.'³ Equally amazing was the leniency shown in the case of Hughlin Gerard of Bologna Grassa. On 21 July 1388, he received a pardon, for a payment of £100 at the Exchequer, although he was a proven spy. Since his entry into England sometime during the first year of Richard II's reign, he had committed a long series of crimes against the realm and the statutes. These included the illegal exportation of bullion abroad, and other economic offences such

1. C.C.R., 1377-81, p. 416.

2. C.P.R., 1377-81, pp. 163, 219; C.C.R., 1377-81, pp. 164, 174, 319, 398.

3. C.P.R., 1381-5, pp. 190-1. It is strange that a traitor should have been pardoned so easily. In the 1290s, Thomas Turberville had paid for his treason with his life. See Alban and Allmand, 'Spies and Spying', pp. 99-100.

as importing pearls, silks and other luxury commodities into England. Furthermore, he had carried out 'divers exchanges' within the realm without licence, exported uncustomed wools, and brought wools from Calais in contravention of the town's ordinances. In addition to these offences, he had 'betrayed the secrets and counsel of the realm to his master, a Frenchman, at Paris!'¹

Such leniency seems quite out of keeping with the strict precautions taken against spies by the crown to ensure the security of the realm. Perhaps it was felt that in these cases, at least, money fines would be a deterrent to such activity in the future. But it seems that agents were indeed sometimes committed to gaol. In 1384, a malefactor who had stirred up trouble 'to the peril of the realm' was ordered to be arrested by Nicholas Brembre, the mayor of London, and to be imprisoned in Corfe castle until further notice.²

Such a sentence is what one would expect in view of the fact that enemy espionage activities were regarded by both crown and people in England as a serious threat to national security. From the large scale of measures directed against enemy spies, it may be truly said that countering this threat of enemy espionage played a large part in the organization of the defence of the realm in the fourteenth century.

1. C.P.R., 1385-9, p. 501.

2. C.C.R., 1381-5, p. 364.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE DEFENCE OF THE REALM OVERSEAS: THE 'BARBICAN POLICY'

In the fourteenth century, as in other periods, the sea presented a barrier to continental enemies who, if they wished to attack England, were obliged to resort to the use of ships. The tactical concept of meeting enemy fleets at sea before they could actually land in England was apparent from time to time during the fourteenth century¹, and a strong naval policy of interception at sea was common from the Tudor period onwards. But the idea of the sea itself as a barrier gave rise to the analogy of England as the 'island fortress' with the sea as its moat. Such an idea did not escape later historians. Z.A. Freeman, for instance, writing on the defensive arrangements of 1295, aptly referred to this 'moat defensive'².

More importantly, it is clear that many Englishmen of the fourteenth century recognized the fortress analogy, and the crown, in the later part of the century, was prepared to emphasize such imagery

1. See Chapter X above.

2. Z.A. Freeman, 'A Moat Defensive: the Coast Defense Scheme of 1295', Speculum, xlii (1967), 442-62.

in justification of its enormous war expenditure on overseas possessions. Many fortresses during the period were equipped with barbicans situated on the further side of the moat and which protected the crossing of the moat itself. Such structures were thus the first line of defence. It was a logical extension of the fortress analogy to claim that the English-held possessions in France were the first line in the defences of England herself.

The official royal response in the Gloucester parliament of October 1378 to the commons' complaints over expenditure on the upkeep of castles and towns in France was that such places 'sont et doivent estre come Barbicans al roialme d'Engleterre'. If they were well guarded and the sea well kept, then the realm would be guaranteed safety; if not, then enemies would wage war on England's doorstep¹. This was the official policy, repeated in the following century by a number of poets and by the writer of The Libelle of Englyshe Polycye, who stressed the importance of such overseas possessions². The English, throughout the fourteenth century phase of the Hundred Years' War, had indeed maintained fortresses on the periphery of French territories, but did these in fact serve, as the crown claimed, in the defence of England herself?

In the view of von Clausewitz and the other modern military theorists, attack is the best form of defence³. If the war is taken to

1. Rot. Parl., iii. 36.

2. The Libelle of Englyshe Polycye, ed. Warner, ll. 15-21, p. 2. The author of the poem 'God Save the Kyng and Kepe the Crowne', which was written in 1413, stated:
'Oure townes and castels ye reme wip-oute,
þey are oure stones of gret pouste'
(Twenty-Four Political and Other Poems from Oxford MSS. Digby 102 and Douce 322, ed. J. Keil (E.E.T.S., Series no. 124, 1904), p. 51).

3. C. von Clausewitz, On War, trans. J.J. Graham (3 vols., London, 1956), ii. 133, 137; iii. 2, 215-21.

the enemy and fought within his territories, then there is every chance that he will be too tied down protecting home and hearth to do any harm to his opponent's territories. At worst, he will be unable to attack the territories of his opponent with his fullest strength. It is therefore possible to see all English military involvement overseas during the Hundred Years' War as an attempt to keep the French away from England by completely occupying them on the far side of the Channel. This is, however, obviously an extreme view and an erroneous one, since there were clearly more immediate and valid reasons for English military activity in France during the Hundred Years' War. There is, none the less, some small grain of truth in the idea: evidence suggests that some contemporaries did appreciate that an offensive war could also have a defensive objective underlying it. Commissions of array of troops for overseas service, for example, often contained a clause stating that such troops were to be raised 'pro defensione regni nostri in partibus transmarinis'. For instance, troops raised for the king's army in April 1346 under the terms of the Statute of Winchester were to serve 'pro passagio nostro pro defensione regni nostri'¹. It may be argued that the description of such troops serving abroad as 'in defence of the realm' was a fiction promulgated by the crown to give a semblance of legality to the employment of jurati outside their own shire in a role which was other than defensive. There were, however, many similarities between arrayed troops who served in home defence and those who served abroad. Both types were raised by the commission of array, and although commissions of arrays for home defence

1. P.R.O., C. 76/22, m. 17. Numerous other such references occur throughout the period.

usually differed in terminology from those issued to raise men for service overseas, both were allegedly made in pursuance of the Statute of Winchester. The links went even further. Men serving abroad were usually exempted from their obligations of coastal defence, while men serving in the defence of the coast in one particular shire were normally exempt from performing service elsewhere. Men serving overseas were frequently granted royal letters of attorney or protection during their absence, as were men serving in defence of the shores¹.

From the outset of the war with France in 1337 the English maintained certain possessions in France. Gascony, held by the English throughout the fourteenth century was always a threat to the flank of southwestern France, while the Channel Islands, which changed hands several times during the wars, were, when in English possession, strategically important from the naval point of view and were an invaluable guard to the flank of English-held territories in Normandy later in the century². These were the main territories in English hands at the beginning of the war, although each decade added to the number of territories and fortresses held by the English in France. Of the fortresses gained by the English, some were won by force of arms while others came into their possession by means of shrewd alliances. In 1347, Calais fell to

1. I have not, however, found an instance of persons serving on the garde de la mer receiving pardons in consideration of good service, as was so often the case of men who had performed good military service abroad.

2. On Gascony, see M.G.A. Vale, English Gascony, 1399-1453. A Study of War, Government and Politics during the Later Stages of the Hundred Years War (Oxford, 1970), especially Chapter I. On the Channel Islands, see J. le Patourel, The Medieval Administration of the Channel Islands (Oxford, 1937).

English arms, to remain a most important base for the English throughout the century. The period from its capture up until the Peace of Brétigny witnessed English expansion into the march of Calais and the taking of forts inland to protect the approaches to Calais. The castles of Marck and Oye, gained in 1348, Coulogne and Sangatte in 1349, Guines in 1342, and Hammes in 1358 all served as blockhouses guarding the landward approaches to Calais, and with the addition of the county of Guines and the castles of Ardres and Audruicq in 1360, the periphery of the Calais march was ringed with a series of English-held fortresses¹. Elsewhere in France other fortresses came into English hands. Support of the Montfortist faction in Brittany from 1341 onwards brought with it English occupation of many Breton fortresses, the majority of which lay near the coast, and of which the most important was Brest². Alliances with the Harcourts in the 1340s and the Navarrese in the 1350s and 1370s led to the occupation of fortresses in Normandy and the Cotentin, the most important of which were Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte and Cherbourg³. La Rochelle, another important port, and a principal centre of the salt-trade, came into English hands as a direct result of the Treaty of Brétigny⁴. Thus by the 1370s the English held a number of fortresses.

1. S.J. Burley, 'The Victualling of Calais, 1347-65', B.I.H.R., xxxi (1958), 51.

2. M. Jones, Ducal Brittany, 1364-99. Relations with England and France during the Reign of Duke John IV (Oxford, 1970).

3. On Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte see L. Delisle, Histoire du Château et des Sires de Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte (Paris, 1867). On Cherbourg see M. Masson d'Autume, Cherbourg pendant la Guerre de Cent Ans de 1354 à 1450 (St-Lô, 1948).

4. J. le Patourel, 'The Treaty of Brétigny', T.R.Hist.S., 5th series, x (1960), 24.

situated around the coasts of France and stretching from Calais in the north to Bordeaux and Bayonne in the south-west¹.

These English possessions overseas had a multiplicity of functions. Their primary role was, however, essentially an offensive one. Their first and most obvious use was as bases where the English could safely land, with a secure beachhead, and whence they could launch attacks into French territories. This was admitted in the parliament of 1378, when it was stated that such entries and ports had been opened up to grieve the enemies of the realm². Gascony and Calais were indeed favourite starting-points for large expeditions into enemy territory. That of the Black Prince in 1355 had set out from Bordeaux, while in the 1370s, numerous chevauchées launched from Calais criss-crossed the northern plain of France, leaving destruction in their wake.

Conversely, the English bases afforded a refuge to English armies which had pillaged and burned their way across enemy lands. The Black Prince's expedition of 1355-6 was returning to the refuge of Bordeaux when intercepted by a French army at Poitiers; in 1373, John of Gaunt marched with his army from Calais to Bordeaux, an example of the bases being used in both roles mentioned above.

On countless occasions during the fourteenth century, large-scale attacks were mounted from the English bases. The reasons behind such

1. Maps of the frontier regions of Brittany, Calais, and Gascony during the fourteenth century appear in K.A. Fowler, The Age of Plantagenet and Valois (London, 1967), pp. 70-2.

2. Rot. Parl., iii. 34.

chevauchées -- be it to uphold English honour in arms, to exert pressure upon the French crown, to weaken French morale by doing the utmost material damage, or to gain territories in France -- lie outside the scope of this study. It is, however, clear that such raids indirectly, or unconsciously served to occupy the French on their own side of the Channel. One must remember that the main theatre of the war was in France, and that the French attacks upon England -- even the large-scale preparations for invasion in 1385-6 -- were a relatively incidental side-show. Nevertheless, the number of places in English hands and their relatively widespread geographical distribution, allowed pressure to be applied upon the French simultaneously from several different sides. A kingdom with enemies ranged about its frontiers, and even within them, can never feel truly secure. When two large expeditions were mounted simultaneously from two different quarters, as in 1355-6 when the Black Prince's expedition in south-west France coincided with Henry of Lancaster's penetration into Normandy with a large force from Brittany, the anxiety increased. Intervention in France could also be used as an effective counter to French naval attacks on England, or even in retaliation for damage caused. In 1359-60, while the French harried the south coasts of England, Edward III was attempting to bring pressure to bear on the French crown by ravaging the north of France up to the gates of Paris. On the other hand, the French naval raids on England may have served the purpose of diverting English attention from the realm of France, and combined Franco-Scottish attacks, notably those of 1346 and 1385 increased the effectiveness of this role by subjecting the English to attacks from more than one quarter. Although the concept of 'grand strategy' was not truly known in the fourteenth century, as in many instances separate theatres of war remained isolated from each other, it is clear that counter attacks on

large scales did have some positive effect and were appreciated by the protagonists.

But of possibly greater impact than the large chevauchées was the constant nuisance value which the English possessions had lying near the lands of the enemy. From such bases the English were able to mount small, penetrating raids into the surrounding French territories, whereby they continually harassed the French and tied down enemy troops in what amounted to conditions of border warfare. Contemporaries certainly recognized this role. The monk of Saint-Denis wrote that 'de maritimis oppidis Calesio, Brest et Cesaris Burgi Anglici exeuntes, praedas hominum et pecudum ergerunt'¹. In 1372, the French king described Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte as the place 'd'ou les ennemis infestoient et ravageoient toute la province'². What was true of the fortresses held by the English crown also held good for those in the Free Companions or bands of 'English', who took fortresses in France and then held the surrounding countryside to ransom by demands for apatis³.

The importance of the role of constant harassment should not be underestimated. One has only to compare the disruption caused in England's northern shires by the endemic raids of the Scots throughout the fourteenth century to appreciate the significant results which could be achieved⁴. It was probably because of their experiences of border

1. Religieux de Saint-Denis, vii. 5. The effects of such raids have been recognized by modern historians also, e.g. H. Denifle, La Désolation des Eglises, Monastères et Hôpitaux en France pendant la Guerre de Cent Ans (Paris, 1899, repr. Brussels, 1965).

2. A.N., K. 49b/69. See also A.N., K. 50/9.

3. On apatis, see C.T. Allmand, 'The War and the Non-Combatant', The Hundred Years War, ed. Fowler, pp. 166, 171-2; Fowler, 'Truces', *ibid.*, pp. 190, 192-8, 200-1.

4. See E. Miller, War in the North (Hull, 1960).

warfare, which had stretched over several centuries and which became particularly strong from the reign of Edward I onwards, that the English had learned to appreciate the power of such tactics.

Involvement in Scotland and in Wales under the first two Edwards had also taught them the advantages of placing garrisons deep in enemy territory to tie down the countryside and also to act as blockhouses in the first line of defence of the English homeland¹. Other well-known lessons such as the employment of lightly-armed mounted troops and horse-archers, and the effective use of the 'herse' of archers in pitched battle, had been learned from the Scottish wars. It is thus reasonable to assume that the policy of establishing garrisons in France was influenced by experience gained from the Scottish testing-ground. Indeed, conditions around the Calais march and the borders of Guienne closely resembled those of the Scottish border. The counties of the north of England abounded with castles, pele towers and fortified towns. Similarly, within the march of Calais a ring of fortresses guarded the approaches to the town of Calais itself. These fortresses were faced by an opposing line of French fortified towns and castles. Both sides of the Franco-Gascon border were also strongly protected by castles, bastides, and fortified towers.²

1. H.K.W., i. 293 ff., 409-22; J. E. Morris, The Welsh Wars of Edward I, pp. 258-9, 267; J. G. Edwards, 'Edward I's Castle-Building in Wales', Proc. Brit. Acad., xxxii (1946), 15-81.

2. P. Lauzun, Note sur Quelques Châteaux Gascons (Auch, 1897) refers to a type of fortification found only in Gascony, which closely resembles the pele tower of the northern English shires. He thus concludes that they were an English importation. The English also built peles within the Calais march, as, for example, at Frétun. On the controversial subject of the military role of bastides in the Gascon frontier region, see C. Higounet, 'Bastides et Frontières', Moyen Âge, liv (1948), 113-31, who claims that they were founded for military reasons, and J. P. Trabut-Cussac, 'Bastides ou Forteresses? Les Bastides de l'Aquitaine Anglaise et les Intentions de leurs Fondateurs', Moyen Âge lx (1954), 81-135, who claims that they were originally unfortified and only later developed a military character.

In all border warfare in the later Middle Ages mobility was the key-note. Need for mobility had given rise to the widespread use of mounted troops and lightly-armed auxiliaries. The English had learned this lesson from bitter experience in their dealings with the Scots during the first thirty years of the fourteenth century¹. In garrisons of southern English fortresses, which had a purely defensive function, the majority of troops were foot soldiers. But on the border, where fortunes of war were liable to fluctuate, mounted troops were a feature of many garrisons. At Roxburgh castle in 1383, for example, the garrison comprised forty men-at-arms and eighty mounted archers². The nature of garrison duty, which is normally defensive, presupposes a preponderance of foot-soldiers, and this is borne by the garrison retained for coastal defence at a castle such as Dover. Here the garrison in 1377 comprised twenty men-at-arms, twenty foot archers, and twelve Genoese crossbowmen³. But while the fortresses of the English in France, and particularly those in the Calais march, had some defensive function, the composition of their garrisons shows that they had a dual role to play. For example, the garrison of Hammes castle in April 1380 consisted of six mounted men-at-arms, fourteen men-at-arms on foot, six horse-archers, fourteen foot-archers, and ten hobelars⁴. At Ardres in 1374, almost half the garrison was mounted: half the 120 men-at-arms were mounted and sixty of the 200 archers were also mounted⁵. The

1. A.E. Prince, 'The Army and Navy', The English Government at Work, ed. Willard and Morris, i. 338 ff.; J.E. Morris, 'Mounted Infantry in Medieval Warfare', T.R.Hist.S., 3rd series, viii (1914), 77-102.

2. P.R.O., E. 101/68/10/230.

3. P.R.O., E. 403/462, m. 8; E. 403/463, mm. 1, 3, 4.

4. P.R.O., E. 101/68/8/188.

5. P.R.O., E. 101/68/6/139. Other castles in the Calais march also showed signs of this. E.g., at Oye in time of war in the 1370s and 1380s the usual garrison was forty men-at-arms, of which ten were mounted, ten horse-archers, ten foot-archers, and ten hobelars or crossbowmen (P.R.O., E.101/68/7/156; E. 101/68/8/175; E. 101/68/9/216; E. 101/68/11/253, etc).

garrisons of the town and castle of Calais also usually contained a large proportion of mounted men. In 1372, for instance, Roger de Beauchamp took over the defence of the town with twenty foot- and twenty horse-archers, while in 1381 William de Montagu, earl of Salisbury was captain with a force of 140 mounted men-at-arms, 150 mounted archers, ninety-nine men-at-arms on foot and 180 foot-archers, which numbers reinforced the existing garrison of twenty men-at-arms, twenty mounted archers, twenty foot-archers, and forty divers crossbowmen and artillerers¹. At the castle of Calais in 1378 almost half the garrison under the keeper, Bernard Brocas, were 'bien et convenablement montez pur la guerre'².

The numbers of mounted troops retained in these garrisons were insufficient for large-scale campaigns, although their role was undoubtedly an offensive one. It seems more likely that they were employed on small raids into French territory. Such raids would have had an undoubted nuisance value, forcing the French to maintain fortresses of their own in the frontier zones which developed around the English possessions. The effect of such harassment is clearly reflected in the frequent orders from the French crown to strengthen towns and fortresses in the Calais march 'pour la crainte des Englez' or 'a l'effroy de la venue des Angloiz'³, or by the frequently expressed fears of the French populace in the Cotentin about the attacks 'des Anglois de Cherbourg'⁴.

1. P.R.O., E. 101/68/9/215. See also E. 101/68/5/110; E. 101/68/6/143; E. 101/68/10/238a.

2. P.R.O., E. 101/68/7/168.

3. Arch. Dép., Pas-de-Calais, A. 736/4; A. 740/60; A. 781/7. See also J.R. Alban, 'Une Révolte des Prisonniers de Guerre Anglais à Saint-Omer au XIV^e Siècle' Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de la Morinie, xxii (1974), 166-7.

4. Masson d'Autume, Cherbourg pendant la Guerre de Cent Ans, p. 27.

Clearly, the offensive roles of the fortresses held by the English in France were primarily aimed at furthering the military objectives of the English in that country. One must also take into account the needs for garrisons, customarily receiving the bulk of their supplies from England¹, to augment their provisions by 'living off the land'. Furthermore, the desire for booty was, for many English soldiers, a strong motivation for serving in France². One nevertheless cannot deny that a secondary result of the offensive role of the English fortresses was that French forces were tied down in their localities to oppose them and, in consequence, this had a beneficial although indirect influence upon England's own defensive needs.

One can discern a certain amount of defensive thinking underlying general overseas involvement by the English even from the earliest years of the war. Attempts to gain influence in certain areas on the continent, whilst primarily aimed at furthering the English war effort, also had advantages for the defence of the realm. Edward III's attempts to gain allies in the Low Countries, in the Empire, in Brittany, and in the Navarrese territories in Normandy were made in the hope that pressure could be brought to bear upon the French from these quarters. The Breton and Navarrese alliances also served to deny stretches of the coastline of northern France to the enemy, from which he could launch naval raids upon England. The decline in the incidence of raids on the English coasts during the 1350s may well have been partly due to

1. Burley, 'The Victualling of Calais', pp. 52-6; D. Greaves, 'Calais under Edward III', Finance and Trade under Edward III, ed. G. Unwin (Manchester, 1918), pp. 338-40.

2. C.T. Allmand, 'War and Profit in the Late Middle Ages', H.T., xv (1965), 762-9; D. Hay, 'The Division of the Spoils of War in Fourteenth-Century England', T.R.Hist.S., 5th series, iv (1954), 91-109; ----, 'Booty in Border Warfare', Trans. of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society, xxxi (1954), 45-66.

the state of hostilities in Brittany, as other writers have remarked¹. By the 1370s the English were making a concerted attempt to ring France with a series of fortresses, both to put pressure upon the French and to deny them the use of the coastline.

But while there was a definite military thinking underlying such a policy, particularly during the phase of the war after 1369, other benefits affecting other English interests accrued from it. Just as the importance of Calais was not merely military, but, through its Staple, also economic, so were there economic considerations underlying the barbican policy. The wine and salt trades with Gascony and the Bay of Bourgneuf, for instance, were extremely important to England. The trade routes lay, however, along the coasts of western France, where English vessels risked running the gauntlet of French and Castilian attacks². Frequently the English crown resorted to using the convoy system to protect the wine ships, but for the best security it was essential that the coastline, particularly that of Brittany, should be friendly, or at least neutral. Control of the coastlines on both sides of the Channel would also enable the English to disrupt French trade.

Despite economic considerations, it is clear that military affairs were more important. By the 1370s, when the English were beginning to experience lack of success in the war and when French and Castilian naval attacks increased in number, the importance of the bastions in

1. E.g., Searle and Burghart, 'The Defense of England and the Peasants' Revolt', p. 375.

2. On the wine and salt trades, see F. Sargeant, 'The Wine Trade with Gascony', Finance and Trade under Edward III, ed. Unwin, pp. 257-9, 261-3, 268-9, 294-5; M.K. James, Studies in the Medieval Wine Trade (Oxford, 1971), pp. 1-37, 119-30; Y. Renouard, 'Bordeaux sous les Rois d'Angleterre', Histoire de Bordeaux, ed. C. Higounet (Bordeaux, 1965), iii. 35-68, 233-66; A.R. Bridbury, England and the Salt Trade in the later Middle Ages (Oxford, 1955).

France grew. This is very well seen in the attempts to extend the number of fortresses on the perimeter of France. In 1378, for instance, leases of Brest and Cherbourg were arranged, and John of Gaunt unsuccessfully attempted to capture the important port of Saint-Malô as another link in the chain of barbicans¹. Other attempts were made to extend the circle of bastions by conquest or diplomacy. In 1387, an attempt was made to capture Sluys, the scene of the amassing of the great invasion fleets of 1340 and 1385-6, and one of the most important ports on the northern coast of the Channel². Alliances made with the dissident burghers of the Flemish towns in the 1380s also paid dividends. The expenditure of men, moneys and supplies in aid of the Gantois in 1384-5 was amply repaid when the capture of Damme by the men of Ghent diverted Charles VI and his uncles from their projected invasion of England in 1385³. The importance of the barbicans in the 1370s and 1380s is perhaps most significantly reflected in the many and costly attempts which the French crown made to reduce them: at Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte by a large force under Jean de Vienne in 1374; at Ardres and Audruicq by the duke of Burgundy in 1377; at Cherbourg in 1378 by a French royal army⁴.

During the reigns of Edward III and Richard II, the policy of maintaining barbicans in France could only have a partially successful

1. Jones, Ducal Brittany, pp. 84-5.

2. On this attempt and on other attempts at expansion during this period, see Palmer, England, France and Christendom, p.7.

3. Palmer, op.cit., pp. 60, 72; Chron.Ang., p. 365.

4. Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte: A.N., K. 49b/69, K. 50/9; Delisle, Histoire ... de Saint-Sauveur-le-Vicomte, i. 185-208, ii. 208-57; Ardres and Audruicq: Rot.Parl., iii, 10-12; Cherbourg: B.N., MS. fr. 26015/2303, 2323, 2326, 2327, 2332, etc.; Secousse, ii. 443, 456; Masson d'Autume, op.cit., p.27.

influence on matters of home defence. While the French retained in their possession ports on the Channel coast, the barbican system could never work effectively. The French, throughout the period, kept control of the important naval bases of Rouen and Harfleur, plus a host of lesser dépôts along the coasts of Normandy and Picardy¹. They also had access to the important port of Sluys, with its wide, safe anchorages in the Zwin estuary capable of holding large fleets. The existence of English bases on both sides of the Channel meant some naval advantage to England, and this held benefits for the defence of the realm. By this means some localized control of the Channel could be effected through the disruption of French shipping. A notable example of the effectiveness of such bases was the interception of French vessels sailing from Normandy to Sluys in 1386 by ships from Calais, and the capture of the parts of the prefabricated invasion fort which they were carrying². But until the English could assure themselves of effective control of the northern coasts of France, the total security which they sought from the Barbican Policy was but a dream. The possessions of the former Angevin Empire, which had extended from Normandy to the Pyrenees, had shown how essential and how effective such total control of the French coast could be. England had been subjected to few threats of invasion during the twelfth century. It was not until the English conquest of Normandy between 1417-19 had again

1. See M. Mollat, Le Commerce Maritime Normand à la Fin du Moyen Âge (Paris, 1952), pp. 8-9; A.N., État Sommaire des Archives de la Marine, pp. ix-xi.

2. Chron. Ang., p. 371; Knighton, ii. 212; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., ii. 147. See also pp. 67, 71-2 above.

established effective English control deep into northern France that sufficient stretches of French coastline came into English hands to nullify any French invasion schemes. The possession of 'barbicans' in the fourteenth century, therefore, did lessen the threat of attacks on England herself, but did not completely prevent such attacks, as the events of the 1370s and 1380s particularly show¹.

One must not, none the less, denigrate the effectiveness of the barbicans' defensive role. Their harassment of French territories had an upsetting effect upon many well planned French invasion schemes. Whenever large scale expeditions were projected against England during the latter part of the century, the French were at pains to take precautions against retaliatory or diversionary measures from the barbicans. While invasion forces were assembling in Flanders in 1385 and 1386, the French were also careful to look to the defences of the Gascon border and of the hinterland of the Calais march².

The danger to the French presented by the barbicans was not merely the threat of attack. All, and particularly Calais, were centres of espionage. Intelligence gathered there could be utilized by the English in their offensives against the French. Furthermore, agents despatched from the barbicans by the English could monitor French preparations for expeditions against England and thus the realm could be forewarned of impending danger. This most important role of the barbicans has been discussed more fully in Chapter X³.

1. See C.F. Richmond, 'The Keeping of the Seas during the Hundred Years War, 1422-40', History, xlix (1964), 284.

2. E.g., B.N., MS. fr. 32510, fos. 276-287; Palmer, England, France and Christendom, p. 13.

3. See also Alban and Allmand, 'Spies and Spying in the Fourteenth Century', War, Literature and Politics, ed. Allmand, pp. 84-5.

In the terminology of fortification the barbican is a blockhouse designed to prevent the enemy from gaining access to the principal fortress. Steps have to be taken for the defence of the barbican against enemy attacks. Since the English fortresses in France were liable to be attacked, provision for their own defence had to be made. Evidence suggests that to many Englishmen the territories overseas were regarded as part of the realm of England itself¹. This was, to an extent, true of Gascony, and especially true of Calais. By extension, the defence of the bastions was regarded as part of the defence of the kingdom of England. The fortresses were thus valued highly and great emphasis placed upon their defence. Their vital role was clearly shown by the king's concern for Calais in December 1387, when it was ordered that the raising of moneys for Calais be speeded up so that 'for lack of payment no peril happen to the said town ... to the hurt of the king and all the realm'². Places such as Calais must have merited regard since the crown was prepared to support their upkeep for an extremely protracted period. The costs of doing so, moreover, were high, although the relatively small number of barbicans offset this to an extent. Wages of garrisons also frequently fell into arrears³. But whether or not wages were paid, the fact remained that the barbicans were extremely costly to maintain. Between 1347 and 1361 an estimated

1. The commons' claim in 1378 that the upkeep of fortresses overseas 'n'appartiegnent mye a la charge de la Commune', however suggests the opposite (Rot.Parl., iii. 36).

2. C.C.R., 1385-9, p. 366.

3. E.g., P.R.O., S.C. 8/346/F/E, 1409 which contains a petition of William Eyremin regarding the payment of wages of soldiers serving at Calais. See also C.P.R., 1377-81, pp.220, 276, 280; C.P.R., 1381-5, p. 185. In times of extreme danger the crown took no chances on payments to troops serving in overseas garrisons being in arrears, as is testified by the security arrangements for conveying 5,000 marks to Sandwich for the payment of troops in Calais in February 1386 (E. 403/510, m. 24).

£14,000 a year was spent on Calais alone; between 1373 and 1379 war subsidies for Gascony averaged over £20,000 a year; in 1378 it was claimed that the Treasurers of War had spent an estimated £46,000 on the safe-guard of towns and fortresses overseas¹. Yet the crown deemed it worthwhile to attempt to support the bastions, even in the teeth of opposition in parliament, and was prepared to run up enormous debts to do so. Inevitably, by the 1380s reductions in expenditure were forced upon the crown, but efforts continued to be made to keep the barbicans functioning against the enemy.

For the defence of the barbicans supplies had to be provided for their garrisons. In most cases, supplies, victuals and armaments were shipped from England, and places such as Brest, Calais, and Cherbourg, surrounded as they were on the landward side by enemy territory, were normally supplied by sea. The rolls of Chancery abound with instructions for the raising of supplies in the English counties for the overseas bastions². In times of threatened attacks upon the barbicans, the need for supplies usually increased. Repairs and extensions to fortifications also accounted for large expenditure. At fortresses such as Brest, the maintenance was the responsibility of the captain, who usually swore to undertake necessary repairs from the revenues of the castle³.

1. Burley, 'The Victualling of Calais', pp. 55, 57 (Calais); K.A. Fowler, 'Les Finances et la Discipline dans les Armées Anglaises en France au XIV^e Siècle', Actes du Colloque International de Cocherel. Les Cahiers Vernonnais, iv (1964), 60-1, cited in Palmer, England, France and Christendom, p. 11 (Gascony); Rot.Parl., iii. 36 (Treasurers of War).

2. Palmer, op.cit., p.11.

3. E.g., C.P.R., 1343-5, p.131; C.P.R., 1358-60, pp. 174, 266, etc.; Burley, op.cit., pp. 52-3, 56.

4. E.g., P.R.O., E. 101/68/10/37; Secousse, ii. 388.

The Calais march in particular was the scene of extensive activity, with works at the town and castle, on the fortresses of the march, and especially on the water defences, accounting for large expenditure in moneys, workmen and materials¹. The same held true for the Gascon frontier².

The most essential need of the barbicans was for troops to man the garrisons for their defence. Testimony to this pressing need is again found in the rolls of Chancery and in Exchequer account rolls, where numerous references to troops going abroad for garrison service occur³. The size of garrisons varied from barbican to barbican. That at Cherbourg under the captain John de Harleston in 1378-9 comprised 200 mounted men-at-arms, 100 men-at-arms on foot, 200 archers, and sixty crossbowmen⁴. The usual garrison of Oye castle in the Calais march during the 1370s and 1380s consisted of thirty men-at-arms, of which ten were mounted, ten horse-archers, ten foot-archers, and ten crossbowmen or hobelars⁵. The size of the garrison usually increased in times of danger. Indentures of military service and their corresponding accounting documents frequently differentiated between the size of garrisons in peace and in war. Thus the town of Calais in 1384 was to be defended by thirty mounted men-at-arms, thirty horse-archers, 200 men-at-arms on foot, and 200 foot archers in time of peace. In wartime,

1. History of the King's Works, i. 423-56; Brantingham, pp. 117, 132, 168, 173.

2. E.g., P.R.O., E. 364/21, mm. 3, 3^v; C.P.R., 1340-3, pp. 279, 426.

3. E.g., P.R.O., C. 61/82, mm. 2, 5; C. 76/18, mm. 2, 4, 13, 16^v; E. 364/4, m. 23.

4. P.R.O., E. 101/68/8/178. There were also to be smiths, carpenters, and masons among these numbers.

5. P.R.O., E. 101/68/7/156; E. 101/68/8/175; E. 101/68/9/216; E. 101/68/10/248; E. 101/68/11/253.

the numbers were to be 140 mounted men-at-arms, 150 horse-archers, 100 men-at-arms on foot, eighty-four foot-archers, four 'sturours a cheval' plus the retinue of the Treasurer of Calais which consisted of a further twenty mounted men-at-arms, ten horse-archers and ten foot-archers¹. As well as these previously specified increases in the strength of garrisons in time of war, it was also common for the crown, in times of dire urgency, to send reinforcements to the overseas possessions. The troubled years of 1385 and 1386 provide the best examples of this. The Issue Rolls for these years are full of references to the payment of wages of extra troops sent hurriedly to Calais, Brest, Cherbourg and the other barbicans, and also record expenditure on the strengthening of fortifications. Activity was particularly strong in the Calais march. The garrison of Oye castle, for instance, was strengthened in April 1386 with the addition of ten crossbowmen, two master cannoners, six garciones, and several masons and carpenters². Throughout the two years a constant stream of troops and supplies flowed into Calais from England³. By sending in extra men and supplies to the barbicans the crown was achieving three ends: the first consideration was the defence of the places themselves; the second was that in defending the barbicans one was ultimately defending the realm; thirdly, troops could also be used in a counter-attacking role to divert enemy

1. P.R.O., E. 101/68/10/238, a, b. Cf. the large garrisons in the period 1347-60 (Burley, op.cit., pp. 51-2) and that in 1370 (Brantingham, pp. 53-4).

2. P.R.O., E. 403/510, m. 30.

3. E.g., P.R.O., C. 76/70, mm. 8, 13, 18, 20; E. 364/20, mm. 2, 5; E. 403/510, mm. 26, 29, 30; E. 403/512, mm. 1-4, 8, etc.

designs upon England herself.

Clearly by the 1370s, when the course of the war in general began to run badly for the English, the need for the barbicans as a first line of defence greatly increased. As French military power increased in force, the barbicans also became of greater significance as the tangible footholds of the English presence in France, and places which as long as they remained in English hands would ensure that the English retained some hold in France. The increasing importance was reflected in the development of the keepers of the English fortresses in France. By the 1370s, the crown was insisting more and more in the terms of war indentures that keepers of castles in France should serve there in person¹. Stern punishments could be expected for those who surrendered such fortresses to the enemy. The show trial in parliament in 1377 of William de Weston and John lord Gomenys for their surrenders of Ardres and Audruicq culminated in the death penalty for both, a sentence stern enough to deter other captains from such a course in the future². A postscript to the trial was the recommendation by the commons that all captains who surrendered by default towns or castles in their charge should answer to parliament, and that all such captians should be constrained to go to their castles in truce-time and fortify them³. Despite the increased necessity for the barbicans in the troubled years of the 1370s and 1380s, the wages of many of the keepers of fortresses

1. E.g., P.R.O., E. 101/68/4/84, E. 101/68/9/215, E. 101/68/11/251, E. 101/70/2/617, etc.

2. Rot. Parl., iii. 10-16. The sentences were never carried out.

3. Rot. Parl., iii. 17.

in France decreased. The annual wage of the captains of Brest, for example, dropped from 10,000 marks in 1378 to 2,000 marks in 1386¹. This was, however, the result of the financial difficulties of the English crown, and not through any sense that the barbicans had declined in importance. Indeed, the crown's faith in the barbican policy continued into the 1390s. The attempts at an Anglo-Breton alliance in 1393, for example, would if successful, have brought Nantes, Vannes, and other Breton fortresses into English hands².

The policy of maintaining fortresses in France continued until the conclusion of truce of Leulinghen in 1389, and went even beyond that. Whether such a costly policy of maintaining such strongpoints over a long period amply repaid dividends in matters of defence is difficult to say. Clearly the crown believed so, although since the barbicans also played an important function in the offensive against the French, the English kings had a vested interest in the barbicans which was other than defensive. Thus it benefitted the crown to pursue such a line of policy. Clearly, the barbicans were a constant thorn in the side of the French and, in consequence, were of some indirect assistance to the national defence of England. But it is in the context of the war in general that their importance must be judged, for in the purely defensive context the policy of maintaining overseas barbicans for home defence could never be successful while the enemy retained possession of some Channel ports. It was not until the following century

1. Jones, Ducal Brittany, p. 219.

2. P.P.C., pp. 41-4.

that anything approaching total security in national defence in England was achieved by means of holding territories overseas.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE FINANCIAL BURDENS OF DEFENCE

The French war created numerous burdens for the people of England and for the crown. The responsibilities stemming from the needs of war fell upon many sections of society, so that the many obligations of defence, whilst falling most heavily upon the dwellers in the coastal shires, were also borne by persons living inland. Perhaps most immediately apparent were the burdens of the physical measures taken for defence -- frequent commissions of array, the maintaining of beacons and watches along the coast, the provision of supplies, victuals, and arms, or of labour for defensive works. But there was also the need to pay for the war in general and for defence in particular, and this burden, borne both by the inhabitants of the coastal areas and by the people of the realm in general, was a heavy one.¹

The cost of defence in the French war was a problem which was central to the political history of the period, and one which inextricably formed part of the greater question of revenues for the pursuance of the general war. Indeed, so closely linked are the questions of finance for overseas war and home defence that

1. On the extent of the burdens of taxation, purveyance, and military service, see J. R. Maddicott, The English Peasantry and the Demands of the Crown, 1294-1341, P. & P. Supplement i (1975).

it is difficult to assess what proportion of war expenditure was actually spent on the needs of home defence.¹

The academic concept of a defensive war, as understood by Edward III and Richard II, was taken as embracing not just the safeguarding of the homeland, but also the conducting of military operations overseas. Such a definition was in keeping with the pretensions of the English kings towards the kingdom of France and, moreover, was a necessary one if the financial demands made by the crown upon the commons in support of the war effort were to be justified.² Thus, to some contemporaries at least, all warfare waged by the English crown was, in the last analysis, defensive. Consequently, royal demands for finance, whether for support of the war effort abroad, or for defence at home, were justified as being ultimately 'for the defence of the realm', while all military expenditure was ostensibly directed towards the same defensive aim.³ Thus the grant of the wool custom in 1338 was used to finance the defence of the realm 'in partibus transmarinis',⁴ and many other seeming paradoxes, such as the arraying of troops for the defence of the realm in parts overseas, testify to this particular interpretation of the defensive war. While there was a case for not

1. Indeed, it is difficult to estimate war expenditure as a whole. See C. T. Allmand, 'The War and the Non-Combatant', The Hundred Years' War, ed. Fowler, pp. 163-4.

2. For a fuller discussion of this concept, see G. L. Harriss, King, Parliament, and Public Finance in Medieval England to 1369 (Oxford, 1975), pp. 315-16.

3. For a discussion of overseas war being conducted in the interests of home defence, see Ch. XII.

4. P.R.O., C. 76/14, m. 12.

differentiating between types of military expenditure, this study proposes to concentrate mainly on matters relating to home defence, although, as in the case of the 'Barbican Policy', it is sometimes impossible to differentiate between finance for home defence and finance for the war in France.

The question of finance for the war was to become an overriding factor in relations between the crown and commons in parliament, and often outside parliament, during the period from 1337 to 1389. As the continuing war was a constant drain upon the coffers of the king, his revenues from the traditional sources as a feudal lord, from the operations of government, and as head of state became increasingly insufficient.¹ Reliance came to be placed largely upon the public obligation to support the king's war for the protection of the realm. Consequently, taxation on a national basis became an almost permanent feature of successive parliaments during the period. Between 1337 and 1389, the incidence of grants towards the war made in parliament increased. In the Michaelmas parliament of 1337, the commons regranted the tenth and fifteenth granted in the parliament of 1336, but this time for an unprecedented period of three years, the moneys to be spent on home defence and on the king's forthcoming expedition.²

1. The sources of finance available to the English crown during the period have been fully discussed by other writers, among whom are the following: W. N. Bryant, 'The Financial Dealings of Edward III with the County Communities, 1330-60', *E.H.R.*, lxxxiii (1968), 760-71; E. B. Fryde, 'Parliament and the French War, 1336-40', *Essays in Medieval History presented to Bertie Wilkinson*, ed. T. A. Sandquist and M. R. Powicke (Toronto, 1969), pp. 250-69; Harriss, *King, Parliament, and Public Finance*; J. R. Strayer, 'The Revenues of the Crown', *The English Government at Work*, i. 3-40; E. Miller, 'War, Taxation, and the English Economy in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth Centuries', *War and Economic Development. Essays in Memory of David Joslin*, ed. J. M. Winter (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 1-31.

2. *Dignity of a Peer*, iv. 479-82; *2nd. Rept. D.K.R.* (1841), App. ii, p. 251. See also Fryde, 'Parliament and the French War', p. 251.

In 1338, the subsidy was enhanced by the granting of wools for the king's war effort, in 1340 a ninth on corn, wools and burgesses' goods was granted, and in 1341, 30,000 sacks of wool were granted, 10,000 sacks being added to the commutation of the second year of the ninth, which had amounted to 20,000 sacks.¹

Between 1344 and 1354, the subsidies of tenths and fifteenths granted by the commons were a permanent source of revenue, being granted for a period of two years in 1344 and 1346, renewed for a further three years in 1348, and for another three years in 1351.² Within this period also, the feudal aid levied in 1346 for the knighting of the king's eldest son, raised against opposition in the shires, realized approximately £9,000, while in 1347, the Council granted a loan of 20,000 sacks of wool in furtherance of the war effort.³

As the war continued, involvement overseas and preoccupation with defence intensified. This was particularly the case after the renewal of war in 1369. The period which was to witness English military activity on a widening scope in France and in other, further-flung theatres of war⁴ -- campaigns, which to contemporaries, reflected an alarming lack of success, with no tangible rewards -- coincided with the most intense enemy threat to the English coasts experienced since the commencement of the French war in the 1330s.

1. 2nd. Rept. D.K.R., pp. 150, 160; Rot. Parl., ii. 107, 112, 131, 133.

2. Ibid., pp. 148, 159; 2nd. Rept. D.K.R., pp. 160, 162, 164-5.

3. Rot. Parl., ii. 163; 2nd. Rept. D.K.R., p. 164; Harriss, op. cit., pp. 410-16.

4. For an appraisal of this increased involvement, see Palmer, England, France and Christendom, pp. 5-8; G. A. Holmes, The Good Parliament (Oxford, 1975), pp. 21-32.

Increased military involvement abroad and increased concern for home defence led to a greater need for moneys. Consequently, after 1369, the English populace suffered heavier tax burdens than ever before. In succeeding parliaments after 1369, the questions of finance and of national security became central issues. As the period progressed, the burdens increased. If the closing years of the reign of Edward III were fraught with military and financial worries, the opening decade of Richard II's reign witnessed the highest incidence of taxation of the century. In 1369, the commons had granted, for the maintenance of the war, the wool custom for three years, commencing at Michaelmas, a grant renewed for a further two years in 1372.¹ In 1371, the sum of £50,000, based on an assessment of 22s. 3d. per parish, later raised to 116s. per parish because the original figure had proved to be an under-estimate, was granted for the safeguard of the realm, the upkeep of the navy, the protection of the king's French lands, and the continuance of the war.² In the following year, a subsidy of one tenth and one fifteenth was granted, and this was regranted for a further two years in 1373.³

The early years of the reign of Richard II saw the introduction of a new form of taxation in the poll-taxes of 1377, 1379, and 1381. Imposed for the first time in the final parliament of Edward III's reign, at the flat rate of 4d. a head, it was renewed

1. Rot. Parl., ii. 300, 310.

2. Ibid., p. 303.

3. Ibid., pp. 310, 317.

in 1379 on a graduated scale, and again in 1380, this time at the basic rate of 1s. a head, this final assessment being the most intolerable for the local communities.¹ In the same period as the poll-taxes, the crown received a biennial subsidy in parliament of two tenths and two fifteenths in 1377, a subsidy in parliament of two tenths and two fifteenths in 1377, a subsidy of one and a half tenths and fifteenths in 1380, as well as clerical subsidies granted in 1378, 1379, and 1380.²

Despite the high incidence of taxes, the yields were insufficient to meet the needs of the crown, and by the 1380s, little remained in the royal coffers. Each parliament in the 1380s contained royal pleas for continued grants, for the pursuance of the war and for the defence of the realm. While the parliaments of November 1381, May 1382, and February 1383 were unwilling to make a grant, a subsidy of one tenth and one fifteenth was voted in the parliament of October 1382, one and a half tenths and fifteenths were granted in 1384 and 1385, while in 1386, the commons agreed to the grant of a moiety of a tenth and a fifteenth.³

The records of parliament testify to the constant imposition of financial obligations upon the English people, obligations which were felt by most sections of the community throughout the realm. The burdens of taxation were real enough, but were worsened by financial burdens outside the scope of parliamentary grants. The

1. Ibid., p. 364; iii. 57, 90. On the background to the Poll Taxes, see M. W. Beresford, Lay Subsidies and Poll Taxes (Canterbury, 1963), pp. 19-29.

2. Rot. Parl., iii. 7, 75; 2nd. Rept. D.K.R., pp. 171-5.

3. Rot. Parl., iii. 98-114, 122-5, 144-6.

recurring threat of enemy attack necessitated expenditure by individuals upon weapons in compliance with the prescriptions of the Statute of Winchester. The populace also had to contend with the burdens of the royal prerogative of purveyance, particularly when supplies were needed for the equipping of royal armies serving overseas, but also for the needs of defence whenever the realm was threatened.¹ The extension of the obligation to service in the defence of the realm to encompass the arrest of workmen as a source of labour for military works also weighed heavily upon many Englishmen.² Furthermore, there were the profits of justice, which affected certain of the community from time to time, particularly the fines compounded for the remission of Eyres, a method of raising finance used frequently by the crown until 1374.³

Other extra-parliamentary taxation was encountered from time to time. The urgency of the defensive crisis of 1360 precluded the summoning of a full parliament, and instead led to the formation of provincial gatherings, which each voted a local subsidy of a tenth and a fifteenth, but stipulated that only the first moiety be levied immediately and that the second moiety be collected only when the enemy's intentions were known. The moneys, which were to pay for the making of defensive arrays, on

1. Examples of purveyance of arms and supplies in times of defensive crisis are numerous, e.g., C.P.R., 1358-61, pp. 349-50, 411; C.C.R., 1360-4, pp. 9, 94, etc.

2. On the question of the arrest of workmen see H.K.W., i. 180-5.

3. B. H. Putnam, Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, Edward III to Richard III (Cambridge, Mass., 1938), p. xlvi; Bryant, 'The Financial Dealings of Edward III with the County Communities', pp. 761-3.

this occasion did not go to the king, but were retained in the hands of the local communities in local repositories. Despite this fact, the local communities again had had to contend with taxation.¹

From the above account, it is clear that the English commons had had to bear heavy financial exactions for an extremely prolonged period of time. Inevitably, there was a reaction to such obligations, which manifested itself both in parliament and in the country at large. The reactions to the financial burdens are well known. In the country, discontent manifested itself in a number of ways: in evasion of payment or refusal to pay, in opposition to (and sometimes attacks upon) royal collectors, and, following the poll-taxes, in widespread revolt.²

In parliament, opposition to financial burdens was voiced, albeit with varying intensity, from time to time throughout the period of the war with France. One must, however, bear in mind that the finance in question was not merely intended for home defence in its strictest sense, but for the maintenance of the war in general and, indeed, for other non-military purposes. But since the different outlets of expenditure were inextricably joined together, and since the moneys spent on offensive war overseas were regarded as being spent in furtherance of the defence of the realm, it is difficult to differentiate between them. Grievances with financial burdens cannot thus be regarded as purely defensive

1. Ibid., pp. 768-70. The first moiety was to be levied by Easter and stored in a cathedral church or abbey in each county (C.P.R., 1358-61, p. 344).

2. Examples are numerous, e.g., C.P.R., 1345-8, pp. 305, 319, 400, 458; C.C.R., 1346-9, pp. 257, 356, etc.

grievances which could be added to the physical burdens of defensive service, although they were additional ills to be borne by the defenders of England.

The heavy incidence of taxation from 1338 to 1341 coupled with the burdens of purveyance on a large scale did not go without notice in parliament. Complaints against financial grievances voiced in parliament became intensified during the parliamentary crisis of 1339-40.¹ In the years up to the peace of Brétigny, recurrent complaints manifested themselves in the petitions of the commons in parliament, as the regular demands for granting of war taxation led the commons to demand a greater say in the way in which such grants were to be spent. Thus in 1344 and 1346, the commons had attempted to ensure that the subsidies granted would be spent 'on the war only'.² On other occasions, as in June 1344, the commons stipulated that moneys granted were specifically 'for the defence of the realm'.³

With the renewal of war after 1369, and the decline of English fortunes, the sense of grievance became more intense. In the first phase of the war there had been tangible successes which in part had justified expenditure upon war. In the 1340s and 1350s, moreover, the coasts had been more or less secure from serious enemy attacks, although this was due more to a decline in enemy activity in this direction than to the efficiency of the English

1. See Fryde, 'Parliament and the French War', pp. 261-2.

2. Rot. Parl., ii. 148, 159.

3. Ibid., p. 148; Stats. Realm, i. 300. See also Rot. Parl., ii. 30; iii. 134, etc.

defensive system. But by the 1370s, not only were the commons obliged to contribute greater sums for less military success abroad, they were also, in effect, being charged more for their defence, although, with the high incidence of enemy raids, the defensive system must have appeared as increasingly ineffective.

Not surprisingly, complaints in parliament became more vociferous as concern for the mounting financial burdens and the lack of adequate defence increased. Checks on the nature of war expenditure were attempted, as in 1377, when the commons begged that a committee of eight be appointed as 'expendours et ordeinours' of the sum granted for the war, and to ensure that the moneys were spent on the war and not elsewhere; or when the commons insisted that the crown accounted for the expenditure of previous subsidies, as in 1378, 1379 and 1380.¹ Repeatedly, the commons claimed that they were too impoverished by continuous demands for revenues to make further grants, so much so that each parliament became for the crown almost a major political and financial crisis in itself. On occasions, as in October 1378, grants were made reluctantly, and amounted to little actual revenues for the king's coffers; on other occasions, notably in the assemblies of November 1381, May 1382, and February 1383, the crown's demands for a subsidy were met with a flat refusal.²

As significant as the outcry against heavy taxation were the complaints about the lack of adequate coastal defence. In 1378, the commons drew attention to the lack of such defence in Cornwall and on the Scottish march.³ If they were paying for defence,

1. Rot. Parl., iii. 35-6, 56-7, 73.

2. See p.368, n.3.

3. Rot. Parl., iii. 42.

surely they deserved better protection? This point was further emphasised in 1381, when it was complained that great sums were levied from the commons for defence, yet they were not any better defended, and the enemy continued to pillage them by land and sea.¹

It is thus clear that between 1337 and 1389, the burdens of parliamentary taxation, of royal prerogative levies such as purveyance, judicial and feudal dues, and other levies connected with the war weighed heavily upon the local communities. Such onerous financial obligations were not completely concerned with defence, although they did have a connexion with it. Such financial obligations, however, were not the only ones which weighed upon the local communities. There were other financial burdens which stemmed directly from the needs of defence.

The mechanism of local defence in the coastal areas centred around the local levies of the maritime counties who were called upon to perform the garde de la mer whenever danger threatened. The number of occasions when such a force was called to arms during the period of the war with France in the fourteenth century were numerous, and the costs of mobilizing such a force must have been large. Indeed, the repeated complaints of the commons in parliament over the excessively crippling costs of the garde de la mer, particularly in the period after 1369, suggest high levels of local expenditure. One cannot, however, establish with accuracy the actual extent of such costs, since there is little direct documentary evidence on this aspect of defence. The problem lay in the fact that the county levies serving on the garde de la mer

1. Ibid., pp. 100-1. See Searle and Burghart, 'The Defense of England and the Peasants' Revolt', Viator, iii (1972), 365-88.

usually performed such service within the confines of their native shire. As such, the costs of their service were to be borne by the county itself and not by the king. The statute of 1344 had laid down that troops arrayed for military service overseas should serve at the king's wages from the moment they crossed the boundary of their native county.¹ In some instances, troops for overseas service were paid by their counties from the moment of crossing the county boundary until they reached the point of embarkation, and thereafter, at the king's expense.² Tradition had also established that arrayed troops from the southern shires, who were sent to defend the northern border, served at the king's wages after they had reached the point of muster at Carlisle or Newcastle, but the wages for the journey from the home shire to the muster point were borne by the county.³

But when service was demanded within the native shire, it was regarded as unpaid service, and the costs were borne by the jurati themselves. The principle of defensive levies serving at the costs of their shires was extended to the inland counties of the county groupings which contributed men for the defence of the maritime county in the group whenever danger threatened.⁴ In such instances, the entire group may have been regarded as a single county for the purposes of national security, although, in any case, under the terms of the statute of 1327, whenever necessity required it, the

1. Stats. Realm, i. 300-1.

2. See Hewitt, Organization of War under Edward III, pp. 40-9.

3. This was the case in 1339 and 1344 (Rot. Parl., ii. 110, 119; C.C.R., 1343-6, p. 471). See also Harriss, King, Parliament, and Public Finance, p. 386; Hewitt, Organization of War under Edward III, p. 41.

4. See Ch. IV.

king could command service outside the native shire on 'the sudden coming of strange enemies into the realm'.¹

It was largely under the terms of this statute that in periods of intense danger arrayed troops from shires far from the sea could be mobilized to assist in the defence of the coasts. In ordinary circumstances, the posse comitatus of the coastal shires was deemed sufficient to cope with enemy attacks. But in instances of acute danger -- especially in 1360 and 1386 -- contingents of selected arrayed troops could be levied in inland counties to reinforce the defenders on the coast. The writs of array sent to the southern English shires in February 1360 stated that contingents of arrayed troops from each shire might be required to perform defensive service outside the shire boundary. On this occasion, the crown emphasised that the levies would not be compelled to perform such service at their own costs.² The finance for making the arrays and the expenses of the troops was raised by means of grants of a tenth and a fifteenth made at provincial assemblies, the moneys remaining in the hands of the local communities.³

The fear of invasion in 1386 prompted the crown in September to order the levy of specified numbers of archers in inland counties for a defensive army which was to supplement the usual defensive forces on the coasts, or to be deployed wherever necessity dictated.⁴ The writs, which stipulated the numbers of archers to be raised in each county, stated that the contingents were to assemble

1. Stats. Realm, i. 255-7.

2. C.P.R., 1358-61, pp. 405-8.

3. Ibid., pp. 404-5; C.C.R., 1360-4, p. 94; Dignity of a Peer, iv. 619-20; Bryant, 'The Financial Dealings of Edward III', pp. 768-70.

4. C.P.R., 1385-9, pp. 217, 242. General arrays for defence involving the county levies had already been ordered in May (ibid., pp. 176-81).

at London by Michaelmas at the latest. Evidently there was some confusion as to who was to pay the wages of these archers, since on 2 October, the king declared that it was his intention that the archers should be brought to London at the cost of the county concerned.¹ The responsibility of the county was emphasised on 11 October, when the sheriffs and arrayers of three counties were instructed to discover how long their contingents had spent in going to the muster point, in remaining there, and returning home, and then to pay each archer wages of 6d. a day from moneys levied upon the men of the county who had stayed at home.² Although the crown had informed the sheriffs and arrayers that the costs of the levies were to be borne by the counties concerned, many archers had complained that they had not been paid.

The indecision and mismanagement shown on this occasion manifested itself in different conditions of service for archers from the south eastern counties. The archers from counties within fifty miles of London were sent home on 9 October, and the arrayers were ordered to cease any levy of moneys for their upkeep. It was further stated, in an inquiry of February 1387 into the abuses over the raising of moneys for the support of these troops, that the Council had advised that these archers should return to their homes without receiving either wages or expenses for their service.³

Clearly, in the crisis year of 1386, there was no fixed rule concerning payment of shire levies serving outside their county in

1. C.C.R., 1385-9, p. 187.

2. Ibid., p. 193.

3. C.P.R., 1385-9, p. 321; C.C.R., 1385-9, p. 194.

defence, as the lack of initial royal direction showed. It was only after the troops had begun to meet at the London muster point that the question of payment arose, and then the crown upheld its prerogative right to unpaid service in the event of an invasion crisis. On other occasions, as the events of 1360 showed, payment was made for defensive service outside the shire. Generally speaking, however, it was more usual for the burden of such service to be placed upon the shoulders of the local communities, as was the case for purely defensive service within the coastal shire.

The burdens of maintaining local defence forces in the home shires were increased by the obligation upon the men of the coastal shires to maintain watches and beacons on the coast. The costs of the upkeep of the beacons and watches were levied upon the hundreds within the shire.¹ In Norfolk in 1325, for example, the inhabitants of the hundred of North Erpingham were to pay 12s. 6d. a week for the payment of the coastal watches, while the inland hundreds of South Erpingham and Mitford contributed respectively 6s. 8d. and 3s. 6d. towards the upkeep of the watches in North Erpingham.² As well as contributing to the watches, men of the shire were liable for service on watch duty, since the watches were usually ordered to be kept by day and by night. For this they received wages -- 3d. a day in Norfolk in 1325 -- but the cost to them in lost time, particularly during the harvest season, cannot be measured. That the twin burdens of contributing financially to the upkeep of watches and the provision of watch-service were onerous is clear

1. See Ch. VIII; W. Spurdens, 'The Hundred of Trunstead', Norfolk Archaeology, iii (1852), 80-1.

2. Coke, Fourth Institutes, pp. 150-1. See Ch. VIII for a fuller account.

from contemporary records. There were frequent complaints, as in the parliament of 1372, when the commons requested that the numbers of men on the Petti-Wacche in the coastal shires be reduced by half since the watches were the cause of impoverishment to the commons.¹ The burdens of the watches in certain south coastal shires in the winter of 1346 were so heavy that the keepers of the maritime lands were told to allow men to return home.²

To the costs of the actual maintenance of the garde de la mer one may add further costs which were borne by individuals. Under the terms of the Statute of Winchester, all fencible men were obliged to furnish themselves with arms sufficient to their status. Whereas in certain cases arms -- defined in the statute as heritable -- would be handed down from father to son, in many other cases men would have to provide themselves with arms to comply with the twice-yearly view of arms. Although in many instances, as has been demonstrated above, levels of arming were low, the equipment prescribed by the statute for the upper ranks of the jurati ad arma was relatively expensive.³

The numerous burdens connected with the guarding of the sea coasts on land, of which the commons complained on many occasions, were complemented by the communal burdens for defence at sea. Although much of the cost was borne by the crown, which, after 1345, relied heavily upon grants of tonnage and poundage levied on wools, wine, and merchandise to pay for naval defence, defence

1. Rot. Parl., ii. 314.

2. P.R.O., C. 76/23, m. 8^v. Also cited in Hewitt, Organization of War under Edward III, p. 18.

3. See Ch. VI.

at sea entailed further financial burdens for many Englishmen.¹ By far the greatest burden lay upon the private shipowner. The only viable way the crown could obtain a fleet large enough for patrolling the coasts and for transporting troops and supplies to the continent was by means of impressing shipping and seamen to man them. With few exceptions prior to 1380, the crown did not compensate shipowners whose vessels had been impressed into service.² Such impressment meant that the shipowners risked loss of or damage to their ships when in action, and it also meant financial difficulties through loss of trade while the vessels were in royal service, sometimes for protracted periods. In consequence, opposition manifested itself in the form of refusals to serve and by complaints in parliament.³ The cry that ships and seamen were being held under arrest for longer periods than necessary -- sometimes up to half a year -- to the detriment of merchants and the navy, was all too common in parliaments after 1371.⁴

To the burdens of payments for shipping and of physical impressment, were sometimes added the obligation of towns to

1. See Harriss, King, Parliament, and Public Finance, pp. 459-65. Expenditure was chiefly upon the payment of the wages of sailors and troops serving at sea, for their arms, supplies and victuals, and, after 1380, for the hire of vessels.

2. As in January 1340, when the Council agreed to pay 'of special grace' half the costs of shipping raised in the Cinque Ports and western ports (J. S. Kepler, 'The Effects of the Battle of Sluys upon the Administration of English Naval Impressment, 1340-3', Speculum, xlviii (1973), 72.

3. See *ibid.*, p. 72; C. F. Richmond, 'The War at Sea', The Hundred Years' War, ed. Fowler; pp. 108-9.

4. Rot. Parl., ii. 305-9. See also *ibid.*, 311, 319-20; iii. 24-5, 46, etc.

build vessels for the king's fleet. Such building programmes were initiated in 1337, 1372, and 1377, and were extended in the 1380s to include repairs to ships. The town barge system, however, only applied to certain specified towns and its burdens were thus limited. Indeed, the scheme of 1377 further limited the costs of construction to the richest inhabitants of the towns concerned.¹

If the commons had to contend with heavy financial burdens both in the naval sphere and in the field of war and defence as a whole, the crown was also burdened with the costs. Admittedly, the financial means for running a war policy were largely provided, in the last analysis, by parliamentary taxation; but it was the king who had the immense problem of trying to ensure sufficient funds for the prosecution of the war. In naval affairs, it was the crown which provided the wages of sailors and of troops serving at sea, and when fleets were active for prolonged periods, this could be a costly business. Each fleet prepared for sea involved expenditure, which ranged from the payments made to the sergeants-at-arms sent to arrest vessels in the ports to the purchase of equipment and the payment of wages of personnel. Between December 1372 and January 1374, for instance, £40,835 was spent on wages of troops at sea, while John d'Aubrichicourt's fleet of 1374, cost over £15,137 to keep at sea. Such figures were by no means unusual in the later part of the war, at least eleven major fleets taking to sea in the period between 1369 and 1389.² On occasions the crown also had to pay the cost of hired

1. See Ch. X.

2. P.R.O., E. 364/8, mm. 9, 10. For an indication of the costs of keeping fleets at sea during this period, see J. W. Sherborne, 'The Hundred Years' War. The English Navy, Shipping and Manpower, 1369-89', P.& P., xxxviii (1967), 163-75.

vessels, such as galleys hired from Portugal and Genoa. Ten Genoese galleys and other vessels hired for three and five months in 1373 cost the king £9,550.¹

The costs of defence to the crown were apparent in other areas, although it is difficult in many cases to separate expenditure incurred for the war in general from those incurred for defensive purposes. There were, of course, the 'standing charges of defence' to which G. L. Harriss refers -- the more or less fixed expenditure upon the English-held fortresses in France and those on the northern border.² Both groups of fortresses were of crucial importance to the realm. The 'barbicans' in France were indeed a heavy and constant drain upon the financial resources of the crown after 1347. But they had to be maintained at a high level of defensibility since they were in the front line of military activity. This meant that troops had to be supplied for their garrisons in sufficient numbers to ensure their continuing defence. These garrisons then had to be supported with supplies of victuals and armaments. This was a costly business, particularly in the case of the barbicans, which were normally supplied by sea from England. In 1378 alone, the Treasurers of War spent an estimated £46,000 on the overseas possessions, while by the 1380s, the upkeep of the barbicans was so great that on several occasions the wages of garrisons were grossly in arrears.³

A large proportion of expenditure on places such as Calais

1. P.R.O., E. 101/612/52; cited in Richmond, 'The War at Sea', p. 102.

2. Harriss, King, Parliament, and Public Finance, pp. 327-34.

3. Rot. Parl., iii. 30.

went on the upkeep of the fortifications.¹ The fabric of the defences of fortresses in France and on the northern border had to be maintained at a reasonable level of strength in order to repel any enemy designs upon them. Apart from the normal deterioration of walls and domestic buildings, a problem experienced in fortresses which never saw any fighting, the danger of damage through enemy action was ever present. In Jersey in 1376-7, for example, works on Gorey castle and repairs to the king's windmills and palisades 'per inimicos combusta' cost £45 6s. 1d. sterling, while repairs to Castle Cornet and la Tour Beauregard in Guernsey in the same period amounted to £41 3s. 6d. sterling. When one adds the sums of the wages of the garrisons of these places paid during the same period -- £773 8s. 1½d. to Gorey castle and £500 to Castle Cornet -- one sees that the costs of the proper maintenance of such fortresses were high.²

In England itself the maintenance of royal fortresses on the coast was borne by the crown, although other works were carried out at the costs of towns and local landowners. Expenditure varied from year to year, and is well documented, particularly in the case of royal castles. For example, an estimated sum of £20,000 was spent on the construction of Queenborough castle after 1360, while at Southampton between 1378 and 1388, a figure approaching £2,000 was spent on the building of the 'king's new tower'.³ Apart from.

1. See H.K.W., i. 423-56, esp. p. 427. For tables of expenditure on these fortresses up to 1360, see Harriss, King, Parliament, and Public Finance, pp. 328-31. For examples of expenditure on individual fortresses in the Calais March, see Ch. XI.

2. P.R.O., E. 364/14, m. 6.

3. H.K.W., ii. 800 (Queenborough); 844 (So'ton).

capital royal works such as these, the crown encountered continuous expenditure on repairs and extensions to fortresses, as the records of Chancery and the Exchequer testify.¹ The burdens of the upkeep of physical defences were similarly felt by many coastal towns. At Exeter, for example, running repairs to the fabric of the city walls resulted in the expenditure of small sums in almost every year after 1339.²

As well as the expenditure on the repairs to fortifications, the crown also bore the costs of maintaining the garrisons of royal castles and certain coastal towns. Since the French aimed their hit and run attacks at coastal towns in particular, it was essential that such places should retain permanent garrisons for their defence. The jurati ad arma raised in the localities by their obligation to serve were, by the nature of their service, unsuited to long-term garrison duty. There were instances, as at Southampton in 1340, when local levies, serving at the cost of the county, were sent to swell such garrisons in times of danger. These were, however, usually only temporary expedients, and after the threat had passed, the levies returned to their localities. At certain fortresses, castle-guard services or rents, the one calling for personal service, the other for a money commutation, offset the burden of the maintenance of the garrison. At Corfe, for instance, it was usual for the men of the town to perform watch service at the castle.³

1. E.g., P.R.O., E. 364/6, mm. 5, 9, 37; E. 364/11, m. 3; E. 403/463, m. 5, etc.

2. E.g., 1344-5: 28s. (Exeter R.O., Receiver's Account Roll, 18-19 Ed. III); 1347-8: 6s. (ibid., 21-2 Ed. III); 1351-2: 52s. 6d. (ibid., 25-6 Ed. III); 1352-3: 13s. 2d. (ibid., 26-7 Ed. III), etc.

3. P.R.O., E. 364/14, m. 10; C.P.R., 1377-81, p. 1.

But the cost of the upkeep of numerous royal fortresses and their garrisons fell upon the king. Firstly, there was the cost of permanently maintaining small garrisons in fortresses in time of peace, which was a constant drain on royal financial resources. For example, the garrison of four men-at-arms and sixteen armed men at Corfe castle, serving under the keeper, Philip Walweyn, were paid wages totalling £28 16s. for the period from 12 August to 28 September 1380. The size of the castle's garrison and the amount of wages paid had been the customary ones from at least the time when John d'Arundel was the keeper in 1376.¹ Secondly, there was the need in times of acute danger to augment the garrisons of castles by sending reinforcements, who again served at the king's wages. In the summer of 1377, Edmund earl of Cambridge, as constable of Dover castle, had a garrison of twenty men-at-arms and twenty archers serving in the castle. Between 2 July and 19 August he received payments amounting to £216 13s. 4d. for the wages of himself and the garrison.² In the period from 16 August to 12 September, reinforcements comprising one knight, twenty-nine esquires and thirty archers in the castle received wages amounting to £64 8s., while twelve Genoese crossbowmen serving at 12d. each per day under their captain, Bonseignour Belbouche, who was paid 2s. a day, cost the king £50 for the period from 22 June to 29 September.³ Expenditure on reinforcements for garrisons in times of danger was incurred at numerous places and on many occasions, and the continuing cost of maintaining fortresses for the defence of the realm was a heavy burden for the crown.

1. P.R.O., C. 81/450/31442; E. 364/14, m. 10.

2. P.R.O., E. 403/463, mm. 1-4.

3. P.R.O., E. 364/12, m. 2^v; E. 403/463, m. 4; E. 403/467, m. 2.

Although the costs of defence of the maritime lands were largely borne by the men of the shires, there were instances when the defenders were paid at the king's expense. As mentioned above, this was usual in the case of garrisons of fortresses and towns, but payment was also made to contract troops who served in defence of vulnerable areas such as the Isle of Wight and the Channel Islands. Whenever danger threatened, the local levies in the Isle of Wight, as in other maritime parts of the realm, were raised for the defence of the island. But its importance and vulnerability often meant that paid troops were also employed there for its defence. The distinction between indigenous and imported defenders was clearly brought out in a writ of April 1352, which ordered the keeper of the Isle of Wight and the constable of Carisbrooke castle to pay the king's wages to strangers not holding lands in the island and who had come to stay there for its safe custody, but which forbade them to make payments to men of the island who held lands there.¹ In the summer and autumn of 1340, repeated proclamations were made that all men with lands in the Isle of Wight were to return there for the defence of the island, and were to provide men at their own costs in relation to the extent of their lands there for its safekeeping.² At the same time, it appears that other troops, including William de Birmingham, 'militi de Hibernia ... quem dominus rex ad Insulam Vectam nuper misit cum aliis fidelibus suis, in obsequio suo ad vadia sua', were receiving wages from the Exchequer. Thus, between 28 October and 13 December, the

1. C.C.R., 1349-54, p. 416.

2. P.R.O., C. 76/15, mm. 7^v, 17.

men-at-arms, hobelars, and archers serving in the defence of the Isle of Wight received by the hand of John de Wyndesore, the clerk assigned to superintend their arrays, wages totalling £262 12s. 9d.¹

The employment of contracted troops for the defence of the coasts, normally restricted to special areas such as the Isle of Wight, tended to become a more general practice in periods of acute danger. In October 1369, for example, the Treasurer and Chamberlains of the Exchequer were ordered to '*paier de temps en temps ce que busoigne pour gages des gentz d'armes, gentz armez, et archiers demourantz a Suthampton et Portesmuth, et super autres costiers de la meer pour la sauve garde des dites parties.*'² As the enemy threat increased after 1369, so such measures became more frequent. Thus in 1385, a force of six knights, forty-three esquires, and fifty archers served under the banneret, Sir Thomas Tryvet, in defence of the coast of Kent between 16 May and 15 June, for which they received wages amounting to £126 on 1 May.³

It is evident that the need for home defence during the French wars of the fourteenth century brought with it financial burdens which were felt by both king and commons. Since the question of finance for defensive purposes was inextricably tied up with the wider problem of finance for the war as a whole, it is impossible to estimate the actual costs of defence in its strictest sense. In addition to this, many individuals and communities suffered further hidden financial losses through the

1. P.R.O., E. 403/307, mm. 2, 7, 8, 11, 16, 18.

2. P.R.O., E. 404/9/60. The italics are mine.

3. P.R.O., E. 101/531/40; E. 403/508, m. 4.

occasional lack of adequate defence. The successes of French attacks on English shipping at sea and on English coastal towns meant substantial losses for many Englishmen. Both contemporary chroniclers and official records tell the tale of damage and rapine carried out by the French and their allies. At Southampton in 1338, Walsingham says that the town 'totaliter est combusta' by the French; official records amplify the extent of the damage and loss of goods and the official customs seals and weighing beam; while the extent of damage to property has been ascertained by archaeological evidence.¹

In the years between 1337 and 1389, and particularly those most fraught with danger, 1338-40, 1359-60, the 1370s and the 1380s, the chronicles abound with phrases such as 'Normanni ... invaserunt, et pro parte [ville] combusserunt, ... et plura spolia asportaverunt' or 'la dite ville mystrount en flamme'.² We may never know the exact extent of financial loss, but it is clear that a successful hit and run raid could and did result in large losses. In 1377 one sees the defenders of the Isle of Wight buying off the French with the not unsubstantial sum of 1000 marks, 'pro salvatione domorum ab ignibus et residuo bonorum suorum'.³ The financial sufferings inflicted by the raids are also reflected in the commons' complaints of poverty caused by losses through enemy action and in the frequent respites from taxation granted to local communities by the crown,

1. Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 221; C.C.R., 1339-41, pp. 40, 143, 375; Platt, Medieval Southampton, pp. 111-13.

2. Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 287; Anon. Chron., p. 13.

3. Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 340-1.

phenomena which became particularly recurrent during the 1370s. Thus in 1378; burnings and pillaging were said to be the source of impoverishment in Devon and Cornwall and in the Isle of Wight; in 1379 the town of Melcombe was said to be depopulated after burning by the French.¹ In 1371, the abbey of Quarr and Southwick priory were given respite from payment of the triennial clerical tenth in consideration of costs sustained in defence, while Portsmouth was pardoned from paying the annual farm for a period of ten years, in aid of rebuilding the town after enemy attacks.² In 1380, Melcombe, where the effects of the earlier damage were still felt, and Lyme were partially pardoned from contributing to the subsidy and were to answer for 'as much as they can reasonably levy of the issues and profits of the town'. The levy on Newport, Isle of Wight, was completely stayed.³ In the same year, the farm of the prior of Sale's lands in Rottingdean was reduced to forty-five marks because of enemy damage, while an inquiry was held to ascertain the extent of damage done to the manor of Bowcombe in the Isle of Wight.⁴

It is clear from the above instances that damage and financial loss sustained through enemy attacks on the coast were great and widespread. It is also evident that in very many cases the effects of such raids were long lasting. The depredations inflicted upon the Isle of Wight in 1377 were still felt ten years later, when numerous towns there were granted exemption from contributing to parliamentary subsidies.⁵ At such places,

1. Rot. Parl., iii. 42, 47; C.C.R., 1377-81, p. 223.

2. C.P.R., 1370-4, pp. 29, 97.

3. C.F.R., 1377-83, pp. 193, 195-6.

4. Ibid., pp. 198, 210.

5. C.C.R., 1385-9, p. 356.

and elsewhere, as at Winchelsea, where the parish church to this day bears visible scars of the French raid of 1380, decimated populations, ruined buildings, and despoiled properties bore grim testimony for many years after the actual attacks had occurred.

The financial burdens which stemmed from the need for defence and from the prosecution of a prolonged war were thus far-reaching. The question of finance was itself a central issue in the political arena throughout the wars of the fourteenth century, and was a major catalyst in the development of the institution of parliament and the relationship of the crown and commons thereto. Although defensive needs contributed only a part towards the problem of raising finances, that part was a large one, and one which it is impossible to divorce from the wider scope of warfare in general.

While it was the inhabitants of the coastal areas who bore the brunt of enemy attacks and who had to contend more frequently with the obligations of physical defence than their compatriots in inland districts, the compulsion to provide moneys and resources to pay for that defence fell upon most sections of the community. Thus, there were very few people in England who in some way or other did not contribute to the security of the realm. If, as Hewitt says, 'for the great majority of English people the war was ... not a constant and inescapable preoccupation', it was for very many a 'frequently recurring theme.'¹

1. Hewitt, The Organization of War under Edward III, p. 179.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

EFFECTS AND ATTITUDES

This thesis began with a description of the progress of enemy attacks and the defence of the realm during the French war between 1337 and 1389. Although the intensity of the hostile threat to the coast varied within this period -- from acute danger of the late 1330s and the 1370s and 1380s, to the relatively quiet years of the 1340s and 1350s, and to the peace of the 1360s -- the defensive question was one which recurred constantly throughout the period and, as we have seen, had come almost to dominate the political and economic life of the realm.

Although the war at sea and on England's shores formed a minor front when compared to the wider, more intense struggle which was taking place on the continent, it was, never the less, a prominent feature of life for many Englishmen for long periods. In the 1330s and 1370s, for instance, the constant threats to the coasts and attacks on shipping were permanent hazards. The danger of attack, moreover, did not just come from the continent: in the north, the raids of the Scots were an almost perennial problem, while after 1369, the threat from Wales became more real. In addition, the ever-present possibility of enemy agents at work within the realm added to the general insecurity.

To combat the threat to the realm, the crown had recourse to the widespread defensive measures which have been described in the body of this thesis. The crown's burdens in attempting to ensure adequate home defence in the face of the enemy threat were onerous ones, particularly in the sphere of finances. The twin burdens of taxation and provision of military service were passed on to the populace in the shires, upon whom they rested ponderously. To these burdens were added for the inhabitants of the coastal shires the pressures of being in the front line of attack, but while the inhabitants of the coastal shires and the northern borders were particularly affected by the burdens of defence and the threat of attack, it is probably true to say that few people in England were not, at one time or another, touched in some way by the war.

The role of the non-combatant in the war, hitherto neglected, has, in recent years, attracted the attention of historians, and a growing number of works on this subject have appeared.¹ In England, however, the obligations of the Statute of Winchester technically implied that no able-bodied male member of the populace between the ages of sixteen and sixty could be a non-combatant. But while the burdens of national defence were felt to an extent by the majority of Englishmen, especially those living on the coasts or the northern border, there were obviously many men who managed to escape their defensive obligations. It

1. E.g., H. J. Hewitt, The Organization of War under Edward III; C. T. Allmand, 'The War and the Non-Combatant', The Hundred Years' War, ed. Fowler, pp. 163-83; ---, Society at War. The Experience of England and France during the Hundred Years' War (Edinburgh, 1973), pp. 131-62.

is therefore convenient here to retain the distinction between combatants and non-combatants which have been made by other writers on the subject, and to define the former as the fighting men who went abroad with the various armies, thus calling the 'stay at home element' the non-combatants.

From the point of view of material damage inflicted by enemy action, England suffered less than any of the other principal belligerents. The raids of the Scots in the north and the Franco-Castilian attacks on the coasts were of trifling significance compared to the destruction wreaked by English armies in France during the same period. But the fact remained that such attacks had taken place and that they had an effect upon the minds of Englishmen -- not merely on those who personally suffered loss of property, homes, and loved ones, but also on persons living inland, who could quail at the horrors which befell coastal places and fear the possibility of full-scale invasion.

But while England suffered less than her enemies, the coastal raids spelled great hardships. At Southampton in 1338, houses were destroyed and people made homeless.¹ Such was the case in many other towns. Apart from the immediate horrors of the raids, the hardships which resulted from them were often borne for many years. The effects of the burning of Portsmouth in 1371, for example, were felt for long afterwards. In February of that year, the Treasurer and Barons of the Exchequer were instructed to stay their demand for the town's annual farm, while in the following June, the town was pardoned from paying the farm for ten years

1. See above, Ch. I.

since the costs of rebuilding it were so great.¹ In 1373, the town was pardoned from contributing to the subsidy of tenths and fifteenths.² Portsmouth's plight after 1370 was by no means uncommon, as we have seen. Other towns continued to suffer long after they had been attacked, and the results of enemy attacks were all too common to contemporaries. A report on Winchelsea in March 1384 described the town as being 'now so desolate and almost destroyed' by the French burnings and their consequent depopulations 'that the proprietorship of vacant plots and tenements can scarcely be known, and the king's farm, services of ships and other profits of the town are diminished'.³ Thus, apart from the destruction and horrors of the raid, there were long-term consequences which were extremely damaging: the king suffered an economic loss and the inability to render ship service lessened the effectiveness of any naval opposition to further enemy attacks.

One of the most serious results of the enemy raids was the widespread depopulation of the coast caused by the inhabitants quitting it for safer inland areas. In consequence, the coastal area became more vulnerable to future attacks as the numbers of

1. C.C.R., 1368-74, p. 212; C.P.R., 1370-4, p. 97.

2. Ibid., p. 217. In July 1338, following its previous burning by the French, Portsmouth had been relieved of paying the three-yearly tenth (C.P.R., 1338-40, p. 88).

3. C.P.R., 1381-5, pp. 425-6. Melcombe Regis had similarly suffered from enemy attacks (ibid., p. 465).

potential defenders decreased. But while enemy raids did have long-term detrimental effects, these effects were two-fold. While they caused fear and panic among the coastal populace, they also kindled a desire in many men for revenge against the French, thereby contributing to the growth of national feeling.¹ The anger provoked by such raids may well have been responsible in many cases for men willingly leaving England to go to the king's wars abroad. Evidence for this is not, however, forthcoming. But it is certain that the French coastal attacks did indeed provoke retaliation. The attack on Rye in 1377 was avenged in the following year by attacks on French coastal towns, while reprisals were frequently carried out by the seizure of alien ships at sea or in port by English sailors.² But on the other hand, the response of injured populaces often took the form of a reaction against the authorities who were seemingly powerless to remedy the often hopeless situation. Discontent became increasingly marked in the 1370s and 1380s, when the number of enemy attacks increased and the war abroad began to go badly for the English.

Coastal towns were not the only victims of enemy hostilities. English shipping at sea was a natural target for French raiding squadrons, and on many occasions no ship at sea was safe when an enemy fleet was under sail. In almost every year which saw actual hostilities, there were instances of English ships attacked at sea, resulting in their capture or destruction, the taking of

1. On the development of national feeling, see G. Grosjean, Le Sentiment National dans la Guerre de Cent Ans (Paris, 1927); B. C. Keeney, 'Military Service and the Development of Nationalism in England, 1272-1327', Speculum, xxii (1947), 534-49.

2. See above, Ch. X.

their cargoes, and the killing of their crews. Consequently, financial losses were felt by merchants, and since most vessels came from coastal towns, their losses were an additional burden upon the coastal populations. Apart from damage caused by actual attacks, the fear of attack often caused disruptions which could be costly: in 1360, for example, John de Wesenham lost £860 13s. 4d., the value of perished victuals which could not be shipped to Calais because of the French threat at sea.¹

But although the material damage inflicted upon towns and shipping was troublesome, the most far-reaching result of prolonged war was a war-weariness which affected many Englishmen. The many aspects and burdens of national defence had a particularly telling effect upon the population of England, which was especially emphasized in the coastal regions. Long years of war meant numerous threats of enemy attack, which were almost always accompanied by the placing of the local levies on a defensive standby. Since in theory all adult male fencibles were liable for service, the effects of such mobilizations were widely felt. In the coastal shires, moreover, the need for watches to be kept continuously was ever-present. The frequent demands by the crown for such service to be performed naturally weighed heavily upon the inhabitants of the English shires, and were a permanent source of grievance.² The constant series of commissions of array, some for defence, others for offence, must also have been a heavy burden, even for the inhabitants of inland shires, since

1. C.C.R., 1360-4, p. 170.

2. See p. 378 above.

it was the practice for these shires to send their levies to the maritime lands whenever danger threatened. The indifference of persons to areas outside their own immediate locality worsened the burdens of troops raised in inland counties for defensive service. Indeed, it is all too clear that there was often great reluctance on the part of the levies from the inland shires to defend strangers in coastal counties with whom they had no affinities. The fact that they often received no pay for doing so increased their bitterness, which manifested itself variously in refusals to serve or in the commission of damage or misdemeanors in shires outside their own.¹ Well has it been said that 'the government had developed a machinery for control and total mobilization before either it or its people had developed the sense of the realm as a single people'.²

The other aspects of defensive service, such as royal orders not to withdraw from the danger zone, the precepts to landholders to draw to their estates within the maritime lands, there to array their retainers and place their fortresses in good states of repair, must all have burdened many of the populace. Even the clergy were not exempt. Thus by the 1380s, generations of Englishmen had been brought up under the constant threat of conscription for defensive service, whether as jurati ad arma for defence on land, as seamen for naval defence, or as workmen for the repairs or construction of defensive fortifications. The war and its requirements were also always kept fresh in men's minds.

1. E.g., C.P.R., 1345-8, p. 113.

2. Searle and Burghart, 'The Defense of England and the Peasants' Revolt', p. 369.

Proclamations made in churches and market places throughout England kept the people informed of current affairs, warned of impending dangers, and exhorted, or threatened, men to do their duty.

But it was not just military service, proclamations, or sporadic damage through enemy action which reminded men of the rigours of war. Whereas perhaps only a certain proportion of the inhabitants of a shire would be stood to arms in defence at any given time, it was the financial burdens of the war in general and of defence in particular which had the farthest-reaching effect upon individuals. Persons could be excused from military service for a number of reasons, such as infirmity, but it was more difficult to be granted exemption from the direct financial burdens of the war. The principal exception was the granting of exemption from contributions to areas which had been devastated and impoverished by enemy raids.¹ The lay and clerical subsidies of tenths and fifteenths granted on numerous occasions between 1337 and 1389 affected most vills in the realm, while the introduction of the poll-tax in 1377 and its repetitions in 1379 and 1381 touched a large percentage of the population, although there was evasion and certain classes, such as mendicants, were exempt.² The increased incidence of subsidies granted in the 1370s and particularly the poll-taxes caused extreme discontent which found its most vociferous expression in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

1. See Ch. III above.

2. For a list of occasions on which subsidies were granted during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see the 2nd Rept. D.K.R. (1841), App. ii, pp. 134-89. See also M. W. Beresford, Lay Subsidies and Poll Taxes (Canterbury, 1963).

But while direct general taxation had its evils, many people suffered from financial burdens which were selective. In the 1330s and 1370s, for example, certain specified towns were ordered by parliament to contribute to the costs of the construction of barges and balingers for the king's fleet. Any towns which refused to contribute were often compelled to do so, as in the case of Manningtree in Essex in 1378.¹ Often the costs of construction fell upon only the richer inhabitants of the towns. Other financial measures taken for defence also placed burdens on certain sections of the population. Grants of murage, for instance, which became more frequent as the war wore on, meant that merchants would have to pay extra duties on their goods, while the need for supplies and armaments both for defensive forces and for troops serving overseas meant that many people suffered from the system of purveyance.

As a consequence of the financial and other burdens there was much opposition at times in England to the needs of defence, especially when things began to go badly for the English after 1369. Because there were few signal victories during this period, large expenditure upon war was not regarded as wholly justified, as the records of the parliaments of the 1370s and 1380s testify. Combined with seeming failure in the war overseas were the disastrous results of enemy raids both at sea and on the English coasts. As the toll of these raids mounted in the 1370s, Englishmen naturally began to believe that the crown's defensive system was inadequate for the protection of the maritime places, and, in

1. C.C.R., 1377-81, pp. 43, 46-7, 51-2, 55, 113, 114, 181-2.

the event of invasion, of the realm at large. Coastal populations thus lived in uncertainty and fear, burdened by ceaseless demands for finance and calls to arms. Such calls to arms, although troublesome, were often met with temporary enthusiasm in times of danger, but once the immediate threat had passed, enthusiasm naturally waned, thereby adding to the common grievances.

Adverse reactions to the crown's demands had been encountered in the late 1330s, when successful enemy raids on coastal towns had provoked an outcry in parliament. Such outcries became more marked in the 1370s and 1380s. The commons became less willing to make financial contributions to the king's war effort, and when subsidies were grudgingly granted, it was usually with the stern proviso that the moneys were to be used for the defence of the realm and for no other purpose. By the 1370s, therefore, a great paradox existed in the opinions of Englishmen: a concern for personal safety was expressed, while at the same time there was opposition or indifference to the crown's war policies if personal sacrifice were involved.

Disinterest in matters of defence was not, however, solely caused by the onus of defence or war-weariness. There were always many who felt themselves unconcerned with the question of national defence. Persons living in the relative safety of inland shires were no doubt loth to pay moneys for the defence of the coastal shires or the northern border, and would be even less inclined to perform military service in a shire other than their own, as they were so often required to do. But even in the maritime counties, where one would expect a high sense of involvement in defensive matters, disinterest was very apparent.

Arguably, in many cases this stemmed from the fact that long periods of standing to arms without actually coming to blows with the enemy produced apathy amongst the levies of the coastal shires. References to persons attempting to shirk their defensive obligations are numerous. In June 1360s, for example, John Chester was tried before the justices of Oyer and Terminer for refusing to keep watch for the French at Plymouth.¹ In the same year, the keeper of Southampton reported that the townsfolk were angered by the destruction of gardens to make way for new fortifications, while in 1371 the defensive walls of Bath were pillaged for building materials.²

If many were indifferent to the demands of defence, there were others who were prepared to take advantage of the situation for their own ends. Even defensive officials were not immune to temptation, and there are many examples of corruption or of persons exploiting an official position for their own benefit. In 1387, for instance, a commission of Oyer and Terminer was appointed to deal with the arrayers in Wiltshire who had taken bribes from certain townships in return for not arraying their inhabitants.³ An extreme example of abuse of a position is seen in the activities of Ralph Baggele who, as constable of Corfe castle, captured local people and held them prisoner in the castle, charging them fines for their release.⁴ At a lesser level were the well-known case

1. C.P.R., 1358-61, p. 419.

2. C.I.M., 1348-77, p. 155; C.P.R., 1370-4, p. 99.

3. C.P.R., 1385-9, p. 315.

4. C.P.R., 1361-4, p. 142. He received a royal pardon in November 1361.

of soldiers returning from the foreign wars with new ideas of licence and the large element of potential criminals within the society of the day. Blatant advantage of the state of war is reflected in the numerous cases of Englishmen attacking their fellows in the guise of enemy aliens. Such a practice was particularly endemic in the northern shires, where men pretended to be Scots to cover their crimes. In 1343, for example, the Umfraville lordship of Redesdale was ravaged by men from Cumberland and Northumberland, who attacked in the guise of Scots.¹ At sea English ships often preyed upon the vessels of their countrymen. The Isle of Wight and shipping in the adjacent waters were subjected to the attacks of Simon de Ratheby in 1344, while in the following year, internal discord within the island itself caused the king to order an inquiry into the activities of the inhabitants.² It is impossible to adjudge how far such incidents were caused by the war situation and how far the high prevalent rate of crime was a contributory factor. But it is certain that the crown recognized these problems, and took stringent measures to counter them.

But such severe measures, often undertaken on a colossal scale, did not always meet with success. The numerous coastal places which were hit by enemy raiders in the period from 1337 to 1389 are strong evidence to the lack of success in defensive ventures. There were many contemporaries who had noticed this and would agree with it. But bearing in mind the nature of French

1. C.P.R., 1343-5, p. 67. Other examples are numerous; e.g. ibid., pp. 88, 280, 492-3.

2. Ibid., pp. 388, 505.

hit-and-run tactics, it is doubtful whether any defensive system could have commanded a high ratio of success.¹ We have seen that in medieval warfare the advantages almost always lay with the attackers. This was certainly the case in naval war, where the sea provided excellent cover for fleets of raiders. It was equally true on land. The English had themselves proved this point in France. For the whole of the period under consideration, the French authorities had never been able to combat effectively the destruction caused by English forces. Even the much acclaimed Fabian tactics employed by Duguesclin's armies did not prevent rapine, and throughout the period there were widespread complaints from the populations of the ravaged countryside of France.

On the other hand, the English defensive system did prove effective in certain instances. The English chroniclers frequently mention occasions when the enemy were repulsed by the defensive forces. In 1340, for instance, enemy raiders were driven away from the Isle of Wight and from Plymouth by the defenders, while in 1377 the attack on Winchelsea was successfully beaten off.² On other occasions the defensive forces had partial success. At Rottingdean in 1377 the enemy were repulsed by the defensive levies, but not before they had carried off the prior of Lewes.³ There were occasions too when the enemy raiders were deterred

1. This question has been discussed more fully above in connexion with naval defence.

2. Baker, p. 70; Chron. Ang., pp. 166-7; Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 340-1.

3. Chron. Ang., pp. 168-9.

from even attacking by the strength of the defences of certain places. In 1339, for instance, the French did not dare to attack the Isle of Wight because it was 'bene munita'.¹ The English chroniclers were keen to report such successes to counterbalance the numerous references to English defensive failures.

Walsingham, for instance, shrewdly pointed out that although the Isle of Wight was almost impregnable if properly guarded, it had fallen foul of the French in 1377 through the negligence of its defenders.² Alien chroniclers told the same mixed story of successful attacks on some coastal places, and of other instances where the English defences were too strong to breach. The early fifteenth-century chronicle of Don Pero Niño remarks on the strong defences of Dartmouth, Plymouth and Poole, but admits that at other places such as Portland, where the defenders were 'all ill-armed and few in number', little resistance was encountered.³ Clearly the calibre and efficiency of the English defensive forces varied from place to place and from time to time.

Never the less, there was no large scale invasion attempt upon England during this period, and although the sporadic coastal raids did cause much suffering and hardships for many Englishmen, they formed only a minor theatre in the Hundred Years' War as a whole. The defensive system, which had developed of the preceding centuries, was continued into the fifteenth century and even into the sixteenth, where it formed the foundations of Tudor militia reforms.⁴

1. Murimuth, p. 89.

2. Walsingham, Hist. Ang., i. 340-1.

3. The Unconquered Knight, pp. 115, 117-19, 123.

4. On the Tudor militia reforms, see L. Boynton, The Elizabethan Militia, 1558-1638 (London, 1967), pp. 7-9. C. G. Cruickshank, Elizabeth's Army (Oxford, 1946), pp. 17-40.

APPENDIX 1

Account of Ewan de Montegeri, keeper of the maritime lands in South Wales, of expenditure on the defence of the coasts of South West Wales. 23 July-25 September 1335 (P.R.O., E. 101/612/34).

Compotus Ewani de Montegeri, assignati per breve regis ad custodienda et custodiri facienda omnes portus et litora maris in quibus naves applicant vel applicare poterunt, et omnem terram maritinam in partibus Southwallie, a xxiiij die Julii, anno regni regis Edwardi tercii post conquestum ix, usque xxv diem Septembris proxime futuri.

Recepta:

Idem, onerat se de C s., receptis ad receptam scaccarii de Thesauro et Cameraria, super expensis suis circa negocia regis in partibus Southwallie, xxxi die Julii anno ix.

Iidem tempore, in vadiis ipsius Ewani (capit per diem ij s.), ij hominum ad arma (quos per diem xij d.), iiij archer' (quos per diem iij d.), iiij hominum peditum existentum in comitiva sua circa negocia predicta, xxxj die Julii, dicto anno ix, usque xxv diem Septembris proxime sequentem, per lv dies, ultimo die computo - xiiij £ xiiij s. x d. xiiij s.¹

Item, in vadiis Roberti de Penres (capit per diem ij s.), militis, existentis in partibus de Kedewilli ex parte dicti

1. 'xiiij £ xiiij s. x d. xiiij s.' deleted.

Ewani, super salva custodia marchie parcium Carnwathan, Gower', et costere maris ibidem, a quarto die Septembris, anno ix predicto, usque xxij diem eiusdem mensis proxime sequentem; et vadiis Johannis de Laundri (capit per diem xij d.), existentis per idem tempus in partibus de Kermerdyn ex parte dicti Ewani, pro salva custodia aque de Tewi et costere maris ibidem; vadiis Yevan ap Maddok Vaghan (xij d. per diem), existentis causa ut supra in comitatu de Kardigan, pro custodia aque de Tevi et costere maris ibidem per tempus predictum; et vadiis Willelmi Harald (xij d. per diem), existentis propter custodiam predictam in comitatu Pembroch, pro custodia portus de Milleford et costere maris per idem tempus -- iiiij £ x s.

APPENDIX 2

Indenture between the Black Prince, as keeper of the realm, and Thomas de Beauchamp, earl of Warwick, whereby the latter agrees to serve for a quarter of a year as keeper of the town of Southampton. 13 July 1339 (Southampton R.O., S.C. 13/3/2).

Ceste endenture faite parentre le noble et puissant seignour, sire Edward, aisnez filz au noble roi d'Engleterre, ducs de Cornwaille, counte de Cestre, et gardein d'Engleterre d'une part, et le noble homme, monsieur Thomas de Beauchamp, counte de Warrewyk d'autre, tesmoigne que le dit counte est demoure sour la garde de la ville de Suthamptonie come gardein de mesme la ville, a metre le bien q'il pourra pour la sauve

garde d'ycelle du lundy proschein apres la feste de Seint Jake
proschein apres la date de ceste, iusques a la fin d'un quarter
del an proschein ensuant et pleinement acompli. Et avera le dit
counte ovesque lui sour mesme la garde cent homes d'armes, des
queux il avera de ses gentz propres cynkante hommes d'armes,
lui mesmes, counte, un baneret, et dis chivalers, prenant pour
lui mesmes et ses dites gentz d'armes les gages le roi de guerre
acoustumez. Et avera aussi ovesques lui sour mesme la garde
cent et vint archers, des queux le dit counte avera des siens
propres quarante, checun de eux prenant le iour trois deniers,
des queles gages aussibien des gentz d'armes come des archers
il serra sour et paie pour un mois devant la meyn, et ensi de
moys en moys devant la meyn durant le terme susdit. Et avera
aussint le dit counte une commission souz le grant seal nostre
seignour le roi de surveoir les gentz d'armes et archiers le
priour del Hospital et les gentz d'armes de Berk' et autres
que seront en aide de la garde de la dite ville, et de les punir
quele heure que defaute y sont trove, et aussint de destreyndre
les gentz que solement estre enhabitez en meisme la ville et que
se sount meyntenant retretz, de retournir et de y demourer
efforcement selounc leur estat, et en cas q'ils ne le veillent
pas faire, de seisir lour maisons, rentes, et autres possessions,
et toux lour biens et chateux deinz la dite ville en la meyn
nostre dit seignour le roi. Et aussi seront cynkante livres
d'argent ordinez et paieez en amendement de la dite ville, et
toute manere de garnesture, des engins, espringalds, arks,
arbalastes, targes, launces, et toutes maneres d'autres engins
demourant en la dite ville pour la sauve garde d'ycelle et par

endenture. Et en cas que les covenantz susditz ne soient tenuz ne acompliz au dit counte, ou que les enemys arrivent en Engleterre et demoergent a entencion de conquere terre par aillours, il sera bien a lui a departir de la dite ville ovesque ses gentz susditz saunz reproeche et saunz estre empesche par nostre seignour le roi ou nul de son conseil par celle enchuson. En tesmoignance de queu chose, les parties susdites ont a ceste endenture entrechangeablement mys lour seals. Donnee a Kenyngtoun le xiiij iour de Juyl, le an du regne le roi Edward tierz apres le conquest treszisme.

APPENDIX 3

Report to the Chancellor of an inquiry made on the defensive state of the town of Southampton by the earl of Warwick.

29 July 1339¹ (P.R.O., S.C. 1/41/171).

Treshonoure et tresreveraund piere en dieu, nous venismes a la vile de Suthamtoun au iour compris deinz noz endentures, et gaunt nous y venismes, nous ne trovames ileoques de la vile mesmes mesque diz hommes de value ne uncore ne sount pas crie ne pas autre chose que nous pourouns faire. Endroit des genz d'armes del priour del hospital nous ne y trovames mesque sesze, ne unquore ne sount, et il dient que lur covenant est d'avoir

1. Thomas de Beauchamp, earl of Warwick indented with the Black Prince, the keeper of the realm, to serve as keeper of Southampton for a quarter of a year from 13 July 1339. See Appendix 2.

vynt hommes d'armes et diz hobelours sount plus et nient un archier, ou, sire, vous savez bien que covenaut est entre vous et nous que nous averions del dit priour del Hospital trente hommes d'armes et vynt archiers, sur quei, sire, nous pourouns par sauvete de la vile et par l'avi de nous, que vous voillez s'il vous plect ordiner q'il eyent tel mandemence que noz covenautz soient tenuez, sire. Endroit des gentz d'armes de Berkshire, nous ne trovames nient un a nostre venue, ne unquore n'est un soul venuz, de quei, sire, il semble a moicez des gentz que la vile est mult nuwe de gentz, et pour ce, sire, s'il vous plect, al honur du roi, de nous, et sauvete de la vile, voillez, s'il vous plect, ordiner que les defautes susditz pussent que temps estre amendez. Et voillez, sire, savoir que les defautes des murs de la vile ne voilent estre parfetz ove cent liveres et plus, les quels covingnent a fine force que soient parfaitz, qar il y pount entrer aucune part de la vile deus cent hommes d'armes a frount. Le saint piere, sire, vous voile touz iours garder. Escript a Suthampton, le xxix^a iour de juyl.

par le comtee de Warrewyk.

APPENDIX 4

Expenditure upon the defences of the town of Southampton for the month of September 1339 (P.R.O., E. 101/22/7, m. 2).

Contrarotulus fratris Philippi de Thame, prioris hospitalis Sancti Johannis Jerusaleme in Anglie, de vadiis, misis, et expensis factis circa firmacionem et clausuram ville Suthamptonie,

per Nicholaum atte Magdaleyne, nuper receptorem denariorum et victualum domini regis apud Suthamptoniam, inter xxix diem mensis Augusti, anno xiiij^o regis Edwardi tercii post conquestum, et festum Sancti Michaelis proxime sequentem, quo tempore idem prior habuit custodiam dicte ville Suthamptonie prout patet per particulas infra scriptas per ipsum priorem testantur.

Videlicet:

In prima	Idem. Solvit pro C ferri de castr' et pro uno quarterio
septimana	ferri de Rag' emptis pro gratis et tachis faciendis
mensis Septembris	per avisamentum dicti prioris pro ij magnis igeniis, vij s. iij d.; et pro xlvj quarteriis et dimidia calcee, xxj s. iij d. obolus quarta, pretium quarterii v d. obolus; et pro v clavis ad skaffaldum sub cementariis emptis, v d.
	Summa xxviiij s. xj d. obolus quarta.

Et in vadiis vij cementariorum operancium super firmacione et clausura predicte ville Suthamptonie per avisamentum dicti prioris in prima septimana mensis Septembris, quorum unus magister cementarius ad vj d. per diem per vj dies, iij s.; et vj cementarii, quilibet ad iij d. per diem, quorum iij per vj dies, viij s., et unus per v dies, xx d., et unus per duos dies et dimidiam, x d.; et in vadiis ij carpentariorum operancium ibidem in eadem septimana, uterque ad iij d. per diem per v dies, iij s. iij d.; et in vadiis xvj serviencium sub eisdem cementariis, quilibet ad ij d. obolus per diem, quorum xiiij per vj dies, xvij s. vj d., et unus per v dies, xij d. obolus, et unus per iij

dies, vij d. obolus; et in vadiis ij caretariorum conductorum cum equis et caretis carienda sablone in eadem septimana, uterque ad vj d. per diem, quorum unus per vj dies, iij s., et alter caretarius per v dies, ij s. vj d.

Summa xlj s. vj d.

In secunda Idem. Solvit pro iij barewes emptis, iij d.; septimana et pro j cerura et clave ad portam australem mensis Septembris emptis, viij d.; et pro xxvj bordis emptis ad unam portecolys cooperiendam extra portam australem iuxta mare, iij s. iij d.; et pro C clavis de spikyng emptis ad cantellum, v d.; et pro l quarteriis calcee emptis, xxij s. xj d., pretium quarterii v d. obolus; et pro j reparacione de gratis et de tachis ad magnam ingenam, vj s.

Summa xxxiij s. vj d.

Et in vadiis xij cementariorum operancium in secunda septimana mensis Septembris per avisamentum dicti prioris ibidem, quorum unus magister cementarius ad vj d. per diem per v dies, ij s. vj d.; et x cementarii, quilibet ad iij d. per diem per v dies, xvj s. viij d.; et ij cementarii, uterque ad iij d. per diem per v dies, ij s. vj d.; et in vadiis ij carpentariorum operancium in eadem septimana ad portam australem super quendam perietem de studis et lathes, uterque ad iij d. per diem per unum diem, vj d.; et in vadiis xvj serviencium sub eisdem cementariis in eadem septimana, quilibet ad ij d. obolus per diem, quorum xv per v dies, xv s. vij d. obolus, et unus per unum diem et dimidiam, iij d. obolus quarta; et in vadiis ij caratariorum cum equis et caretis conductarum ad cariendam sablonem in eadem septimana, uterque ad vjd. per diem per iij dies et dimidiam, iij s. vj d.

Summa xlij s. vij d. quarta.

In tercia Idem. Solvit pro CC lathes et dimidia pro
septimana uno muro de studis iuxta portam australem
mehsis Septembris et pro clavis emptis ad idem, vij d.; et
pro j clada de sablone iactanda empta, ij d.;
et pro xxxvj quarteriis calcee emptis, xvj s.
vj d., pretium quarterii v d. obolus.

Summa xvij s. iij d.

Et in vadiis xj cementariorum operancium in dicta septimana per
avisamentum dicti prioris super firmacionem dicte ville, quorum
unus magister cementarius ad vj d. per diem per v dies, ij s.
vj d.; et ix cementarii, quilibet ad iij d. per diem per v
dies, xv s., et unus ad iij d. per diem per v dies, xv d.; et
in vadiis xvj servencium sub eisdem cementariis in eadem septimana,
quilibet ad ij d. obolus per diem, quorum xv per v dies, xv s.
vij d. obolus, et unus per j diem et dimidiam, iij d. obolus
quarta; et in vadiis ij carretariorum conductorum cum equis et
caretis pro sablone carianda in eadem septimana, uterque ad vj d.
per diem per v dies, v s.

Summa xxxix s. viij d. quarta.

In quarta Idem. Solvit solutiones Waltero le Bere et
septimana sociis suis pro reparacione unius fossati
mensis Septembris iuxta fratres minores, continentis xxiiij^{or}
pedes in latitudine, et xix perticatas in
longitudine, et in profunde xij pedes ad
taskam per avisamentum dicti prioris, xxxvij s. vj d.; et pro
xxxiv quarteriis calcee emptis in eadem septimana, xvij s. ix d.
obolus, pretium quarterii v d. obolus; et pro emendacione

instrumentorum cementariorum per dictas ^{or}iiij septimanas,
ij s. vj d.

Summa lvij s. ix d. obolus.

Et in vadiis xij cementariorum operancium in quarta septimana
super firmacione predicta per avisamentum dicti prioris, quorum
unus magister cementarius ad vj d. per diem per v dies, ij s.
vj d.; et xj cementarii, quilibet ad iiij d. per diem per v
dies, xvij s. iiij d.; et in vadiis xvj servencium sub eisdem
cementariis, quilibet ad ij d. obolus per diem per v dies, xvj s.
viiij d.; et in vadiis ij carretariorum cum equis et carectis
conductorum pro sablone carianda in eadem septimana, uterque
ad vj d. per diem per v dies, v s.

Summa xlij s. vj d.

Inter xxix diem Augusti et festum Sancti Michaelis.

ENDORSED:

Hanc cedulam liberavit hic ad scaccarium Johannes de Assheby,
attornatus prioris hospitalis Sancti Johannis, xxviiij die Junii,
anno xvij^o regis Edwardi tercii a conquestu.

APPENDIX 5

(a) Muster of the Hundred of Spelthorne, Middlesex. n.d.

[c.1338] (Greater London R.O., Acc.1085, F.P.9,m.2 (Newdegate
Papers)).

Incipiunt nomina de Hundreda de Spelthorne.

Capitanei constabulariorum	(Willelmus Bisschop - gladio,
eiusdem hundrede	(lancia, et
	(cultello.
	(Thomas atte Mille - gladio,
	(lancia, et
	(cultello.

(Willelmus Godard - gladio VILLE STANES
 (et cultello. ET YEVENE
 Subconstabularii (
 (Thomas Savoy - gladio
 (et cultello.

Johannes de Sellyng, centenarius de Stanes, Yveneye et Lalham.
 Walterus Brewer, vintenarius - lancia, gladio et cultello.
 Thomas le Frye - gladio et cultello.
 Thomas de Pappeworth - gladio et cultello.
 Ricardus Rose - gladio et cultello.
 Thomas Roger - gladio et cultello.
 Willelmus de Walyngford - gladio et cultello.
 Ricardus Audemer - gladio et cultello.
 Johannes Clerk - gladio et cultello.
 Johannes le Brewerer - arcu, sagittis et cultello.
 Willelmus Merk - gladio et cultello.

Simon Had	Willelmus Cordiwaner)	
)	
Henricus le Newe	Galfridus Cantelou	)	arcubus,
		)	sagittis,
Robertus le Welere	Thomas Sampson	)	et
		)	cultellis.
Johannes Brounyng	Wellelmus filius Ricardi)	
	le Gloverere)	
)	
Thomas Pleyndamour	Willelmus Pleyndamour	)	j ^a xx ^a

Johannes Bodeman, vintenarius - lancia, gladio et cornu.
 Johannes Haddone - gladio et cultellum [sic].
 Johannes Taverner - arcu, sagittis, et cultello.
 Johannes le Man - gladio et cultello.
 Henricus de Yveneye - arcu, sagittis, et cultello.
 Thomas Saundere - spartha et cultello.
 Johannes Basset - arcu, sagittis, et cultello.
 Johannes Cloutere, item Johannes Legard, item Johannes le Cok -
 - arcubus, sagittis, et cultellis.

Johannes Cornewayle	-	gladio et cultello.
Ricardus Archer	-	arcu, sagittis, et cultello.
Willelmus Sprynger	-	gladio et cultello.
Johannes Skynnere	-	spartha et cultello.
Ricardus Chapman	-	gysarma et cultello.
Willelmus Gregori, item Johannes Cosyn	-	gysarmis et cultellis.
Thomas Child	-	gladio et cultello.
Petrus Beuchamp	-	spartha et cultello.
Thomas atte Knelle	-	gladio et cultello. ij ^a xx ^a
Johannes Tilere, vintenarius	-	lancia, gladio et cultello.
Johannes Kent	-	gladio et cultello.
Petrus Lomb, item Johannes le Sadelere	)	) sparthis et cultellis.
Robertus Piscator, item Thomas Tresour)	
Robertus Eliot)	
Petrus le Whelere	-	arcu, sagittis, et cultello.
Willelmus Barcel	-	spartha et cultello.
Ricardus Montelyn	-	gladio et cultello.
Willelmus Moncalyn, item Willelmus Glovere	-	sparthis et cultellis.
Johannes Tannere	-	bil et cultello.
Johannes Ballard	-	gladio et cultello.
Johannes le Kember, item Willelmus Papworth	-	sparthis et cultellis.
Laurentius atte Haiche	-	gladio et cultello.
Alanus Kampains	-	bil et cultello.
Johannes le Duk	-	spartha et cultello.
Willelmus Gregori	-	bil et cultello. iij ^a xx ^a

VILLA LALHAM.

Subconstabularii de Lalham, Nicholas de Ware
 et Johannes Joliff - gladiis et cultellis.

Simon de Furno, vintenarius	-	lancia, gladio et cultello.
Johannes South	-	arcu, sagittis, et cultello.
Henricus Greylyng	-	spartha et cultello.
Willelmus Broun	-	spartha et cultello.
Thomas atte Cherche, item Thomas Asegar)	
Willelmus Snaw, item Thomas atte Ovene)	
Rogerus le Cog, item Walterus Bush	)	sparthis et cultellis.
Johannes Cosere, item Adam le Kyng)	
Thomas le Yonge, item Johannes Smaw)	
Thomas in the Lane, item Johannes Heywood)	
Willelmus Cofere, item Walterus Est	)	sparthis et cultellis
Robertus le Swon, item Robertus Raghener	)	iiij ^a xx ^a
Johannes Kent, vintenarius	-	lancia, gladio et cornu.
Galfridus Othyn, Ricardus Smyth)	
Johannes Mareschal, Johannes Coupere)	
Johannes Godgrom, Walterus Gaal	)	sparthis et cultellis.
Radulphus le Gal, Willelmus Wemdouth)	
Willelmus Wygod, Willelmus Serich)	
Simon Cole, Andreas Wyth)	
Gilbertus le Tailor, Johannes Est)	
Meredith, Henricus le Fisser)	
Henricus South, Johannes Smyth	)	sparthis et cultellis.
Johannes Pikerel, Willelmus de Ware	)	xx ^a v ^a Centena

(b) Extract from the Muster held at Ipswich, Suffolk. 19

Edward II (1325-6) (P.R.O., C.47/2/23/42^v.)

Rotulus de agistamenta armorum facta in Gippewycz per Johannem
Irp et Johannem de Prestoun, constabulares eiusdem ville electos

et juratos coram T. de Bavent et R. de Mundevill et socio suo per dictum regem ad agistamentam armorum in comitatu Suffolk' assignatis, anno regni regis Edwardi filii regis Edwardi xix^o.

	(Gilbertus de Burgh - aketoun, hauberchoun,
	(bacinet, gauntz de ferro,
	(espei, cutell, launce,
	(chival, pretium xl s.
Arraiatores	(
	(Johannes Harneys - aketoun, hauberchoun,
	(bacinet, gauntz de ferro,
	(espei, cutel, launce,
	(chival, pretium xl s.
	(
	(Johannes de Prestoune - aketoun, hauberchoun,
	(bacinet, gauntz de ferro,
	(espei, cutel, launce et
	(chival, pretium xl s.
Cunstabulares	(
	(Johannes Irp - aketoun, hauberchoun,
	(bacinet, gaunt de ferro,
	(espei, cutel, launce et
	(chival, pretium xl s.
Centenarius	Ricardus de Leiham - aketoun, hauberchoun, bacinet
	de ferro, espei, cutel,
	launce, chival, pretium xl s.
	idem Ricardus agistatus ad j hominem sufficienter
	arraiatum sumptubus ipsius Ricardi.
Vintenarius	Thomas de Westhale - aketoun, bacinet, espei,
	cutell.
Willelmus Buskereche	- gizarm et cutell.
Simon de Caldewall	- gizarm et cutell.
Simon de la Thy	- ark, sezttes, et cutell.
Simon (?)hols	- ark, settes, espei et cutell.
Hugo le Webbere	- gizarm et cutell.
Galfridus filius Hugonis le Webbere	- gizarm et cutell.
Simon, frater eiusdem Galfridi	- gizarm et cutell.
Elyas Pours	- ark, settes, et cutell.
Walterus de Fransham	- ark, sezttes, espei et cutell.
Nicholaus le Seriaunt	- ark, sezttes, et cutell.
Thomas de Panteria	- ark, sezttes, et cutell.
Thomas Pas	- hache et cutell.

Reginaldus Cok	- lancia et cutellus.
Godwynus le Combere	- gysarm et cutellus.
Robertus Richeman	- gladius et cutellus.
Matheus Lenge	- hache et cutellus.
Edmundus Dousing	- gladius et cutellus.
Thomas le Lethe	- gysarm et cutellus.
Petrus Mathen	- hache et cutellus.
Nicholaus Helmz	- gladius et cutellus.
Thomas Helmez	- launcia et cutellus.
Ricardus Unwyn	- gysarm et cutellus.
Elyseus le Clark	- gladius et cutellus.
Edmundus filius eius	- hache et cutellus.

APPENDIX 6

Names of persons with forty shillings or more in lands in the hundred of Spelthorne, Middlesex, with the numbers of and types of troops to which they are agisted. n.d. [c.1338] (Greater London Record Office, Acc. 1085, F.P.9 (Newdegate Papers), m.2^v).

Hundreda de Spelthorne.

Hanewelle. Item. Ricardus de Wyndesore habet ibidem x libras terre etc., ponitur ad peditem armatum.

Item. Heredes domini Johannis de Tychebourne habent ibidem terras ad valenciam x marcarum etc., ponuntur ad peditem armatum.

Item. Nicholus de la Despence habet terras ad valenciam x marcarum, ponitur ad peditem armatum.

Item. Thomas atte Knolle habet terras ad valenciam xl solidorum - ad sagittarium.

Todyngton. Item. Nicholus de Beche, miles, habet terras ad valenciam xl s., ad sagittarium.

Stanes et Kenyngton. Item. Thomas de Oxonia habet ibidem terras ad valenciam xl s., ad sagittarium.

Item. Alanus atte Mounthe habet terras in Stanes et Yveneye ad valenciam xl s., ad sagittarium.

Haneworth. Item. Johannes Dayrel habet terras ibidem ad valenciam c s., ad peditem armatum.

Halleford. Item. Nicholus de Halleford habet terras ad valenciam xl s., ad sagittarium.

Shepertone. Item. Dominus Johannes de Beuchamp habet terras ad valenciam xl librarum, ad hobelarium.

Lythynton. Item. Augustinus Waleys habet terras ad valenciam lx s., ad sagittarium.

Item. Johannes de Selyngg habet terras ad valenciam lx s., ad sagittarium.

Item. Minister de Houneslawe habet terras ad valenciam xl s., ad sagittarium.

Westbedes. Item. Walterus Soun habet terras ad valenciam xl s., ad sagittarium.

Westmonasterium. Item. Abbas Westmonasterii habet in hundreda de Oser apud Westmonasterium, Eyle, Padyngton, et Hendon xliij libras terre, et ponitur ad duos homines armatos, cum equis coopertis, et ad unum sagittarium.

Lalham. Item. Idem abbas et conventus Westmonasterii habent in Lalham, Stanes, Yveneye, Echelesford, et Halleford terras et tenementes ad valenciam c librarum, ponuntur ad v homines armatos, cum equis coopertis.

Hampton. Item. Prior Hospitalis Sancti Johannis tenet in Hampton et Craunford terras ad valenciam lx librarum, ponitur ad tres homines, etc.

Steban' cum Fulham et Sonnebury. Item. Dominus Episcopus Londoniensis habet in Strebn', Fulham et Sonnebury, cum menbris suis lx libras terre, et ponitur ad tres homines cum equis coopertis, etc.

APPENDIX 7

Petition of Sir John de Cobham, keeper of the maritime lands in Kent, to the Chancellor, on behalf of a person distrained to serve in defence of the realm. 24 April [?1346-7] (P.R.O., C. 81/1760/80).

A treshonourable seignour et piere en dieu, chanceler nostre seignour leo roi, honours et totez reverencez. Trescher sire, veuillez savoir que tut leo temps que jeo estoi gardeyn sur la mier en leo contee de Kent, assygne par nostre seignour leo roi, un Robert de Foulestone estoit par moi assygne en la Isle de Shepeye de garder la mier en leo compeynye mons ... [? Roger de Northwode¹] ... en propre persone pour un hobelour as ces propre costagez, tant come la dite garde durra, et l'avantdite Robert n'ait teres, rentz ne tenemenz fors que deynz les siz lieuz iouste la mier, ou il estoit par moi assygne a garder la dite mier. Par quele encheson, trescher sire, plese a vostre bone seignourye de granter a dite Robert q'il soit descharge

1. Document defective. This document is one of several similar petitions sent by Sir John de Cobham to the Chancellor. In C. 81/1760/75, 77, 80, Sir Roger de Northwode appears to have been charged with control of the troops in the isles of Sheppey and Thanet. He was again mentioned as serving in Sheppey and Thanet in letters of Sir John de Cobham to the Chancellor of c. 1350-6, which refer to the period of service mentioned above (P.R.O., S.C. 1/40/102, 104; S.C. 1/63/231).

de la charge que court sur luy pour un hobelour de mesme leo temps solount la ordinance sur ceo faite par nostre seignour leo roi avantdiste et son consail. Trescher sire, jeo pri a dieux q'il vous eit a sa garde et vous doynt bone vie et longe.

Escripte a Coulyng, leo vyntisme qarte jour de April.

Par leo seu Johan de Cobeham.

APPENDIX 8

Release of distraint for defensive service in the maritime lands of Hampshire in respect of service overseas. 12 June 1347 (P.R.O., C. 76/25, m. 24^v).

Pro Priore de Hurle.

Rex dilectis et fidelibus suis custodibus terre maritime in comitatu Suthamptonie, necnon arraiatoribus omnium hominum defensabilium, tam militum et armigerorum, quam aliorum de comitatu Berks', ac ductoribus eorundem ad dictam terram marinam, necnon vicecomiti Berks', salutem. Quia dilectus nobis in Christo, prior de Hurle, ad partes transmarinas de mandato nostro est profectus, ibidem in obsequio nostro moratur, vobis mandamus quod demandam quam eidem priori de uno homino ad arma inveniendū pro custodia supradicta, racione terrarum et tenementum suorum in dicto comitatu Berks' faciendam facitis, ut dicitur, omnino supersedeatis et ipsum ea occasione non molestatis in aliquo seu gravetis contra ordinacionem nostram inde factam, et tu, prefate vicecomes, distrinctionem si quam eidem priori occasione illa feceris, sine dilectione relaxes, eidem proviso semper quod custodia predicta, per alios qui ad hoc tenent fiat, ut debet. Teste custode predicto [regni]

apud Redyng, xij die Junii.

Per Consilium.

APPENDIX 9

Orders to the civic officials of Lynn to array the fencible men of their town for defence, and to draw all ships on to the land for their protection. 2 March 1360¹ (P.R.O., C. 54/198, m. 39^v).

De hominibus arraiandis et navibus ad terram trahendis.

Rex maiori et ballivis ville de Lenn', salutem. Quia etc. ut supra, usque ibi providere et tunc sic vobis in fide et ligeancia quibus nobis tenemini, ac sub forisfactura omnium que nobis forisfacere poteritis, iniungimus et mandamus quod statim visis presentibus, omnes homines ville predictae arraiari et armis competentibus bene muniri facitis, ita quod prompti sint et parati ad proficiscendum cum aliis fidelibus nostris parciis earundem contra dictos hostes nostros, si partes illas invaserint aut periculum ibidem mineat aliquale, et omnes naves in portu ville predictae existentes ad terram longe a mari distantem pro securiori salvacione earundem traheri facitis. Teste ut supra [2] March 1360[7].

1. Like writs were sent to fifty other coastal towns between Newcastle and Fowey, to the bishop of Lincoln, and to Isabella, the king's daughter, or her seneschal in the Isle of Wight.

APPENDIX 10

Indenture between the king and Sir Diggory Seys concerning the custody of Pembroke castle. 8 April 1377 (P.R.O., E. 101/34/29/2/3).

E N D E N T U R E

Ceste endenture, faite parentre nostre seignour le roy d'une part et monsieur Desgarriz Seys, chivaler, d'autre part, tesmoigne que le dit Desgarriz est demorez devers nostre dit seignour le roy gardein du chastel de Pembrok en Gales du iour q'il avera primerement la liveree du dit chastel tanques a la feste de Seint Michel prochein venant, et avera ovesque lui par mesme le temps, demorantz en sa compaignie sur la garde du dit chastel, dys et noef hommes d'armes et vynt archiers. Et prendra, sibien pour lui meismes come pour ses gentz d'armes et archiers avantditz pour le dit temps, gages de guerre acustumez, et prendra par le quarter del an pour regard de son corps, vynt livres, des queux gages et regard il sera paieez pour demy quarter avant la main et ensi de demy quarter durant le dit temps des issues de la seignourie de Pembrok par les mains du receivour du roy illoeques pour le temps esteant. En tesmoignance de quele chose a la partie de ceste endenture demorance devers le dit Desgarriz, nostre dit seignour le roy ad fait mettre son prive seal. Donnee a Westmouster, le viij iour d'Avrille, l'an du regne nostre dit seignour le roy d'Engleterre cynquante primer, et de France trente oytisme.

APPENDIX 11

Licence to Swanage and Studland to buy off the enemy if attacked.
8 April 1385 (P.R.O., C. 81/489/3609).

. . . Come nous, considerantz les perils apparantz a nostre roialme d'Engleterre par noz enemys Franceoys, Espagnols, et Flemyns, et coment les villes de Swanwiche et Stodeley en Purbyk sont assises sur la meer et ne poont estre sauvez ne gardez a ce q'est en cas de la soderne venue des ditz enemys, et especialement des Galies, sanz estre ranceonez a noz enemys avanditz, eons de nostre grace especiale grantez as bones gentz de les dites villes de Swanwiche et Stodeley q'ils puissent granter et paier ranceon a noz ditz enemys pour meismes les villes sauver sans empeschement de nous, ou de noz heirs, ou de noz ministres quiconques. . .

APPENDIX 12

Expenditure upon Messengers and Spies. 31 October 1385
(P.R.O., E. 403/510, m. 6).

Cuidam cursori misso versus Orewell cum litteris directis admirallis ibidem existentibus, ad premuniendum eisdem de proposito inimicorum regis - xiiij s. iiij d.

Duobus nunciis missis versus villas Dovorre, Sandewici, et la Rye ad duas vices, et alibi super costeram maris, ad premuniendum patrie de adventu inimicorum Francie - xxxiiij s. iiij d.

Cuidam nuncio misso alia vice versus Sandewicum cum litteris dominorum de consilio regis directis predictis admirallis - xx s.

Johanni Hall de Dovorre pro vadiis et expensis suis misso de Londonia versus Scociam cum litteris dictorum dominorum domino regi directis et aliis dominis ibidem in exercitu suo existentibus - xlvj s. viij d.

Cuidam valletto misso per duas vices de Londonia usque Orewell cum litteris directis probis hominibus ville de Gaunt, ibidem attendente super passagio suo ad premuniendum eisdem de Caleys inimicorum existencium super mare - xxx s.

Willelmo Skrivener de Londonia, pro factura et scriptura diversarum patentarum et litterarum directarum dominis et probis hominibus diversarum parcium et villarum in absentia regis, pro auxilio ab eisdem habendo pro rescussu ville de la Dam - lxxv s. ...

... Arnaldo Turroure misso apud Mergate in partibus de Pycardye, ad morandum et explorandum in dictis partibus de ordinatione inimicorum de Francia - xl s.

Pro locacione unius balingere de Suthamptonia, cum xxviij remis, de portu Londonie usque portum de le Swynne, ad explorandum ordinationem inimicorum - x 7i.

Thome Husk, servienti regis, pro custibus et expensis suis misso versus partes occidentales cum litteris directis dominis et bonis villis in dictis partibus, et pro navibus et marinariis ibidem arestandis pro viagio ordinato supra mare per consilium predictum pro rescussu ville de la Dam antedecte - cxviiij s.

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